THE PHANTOM JOURNAL

E·V·LUCAS

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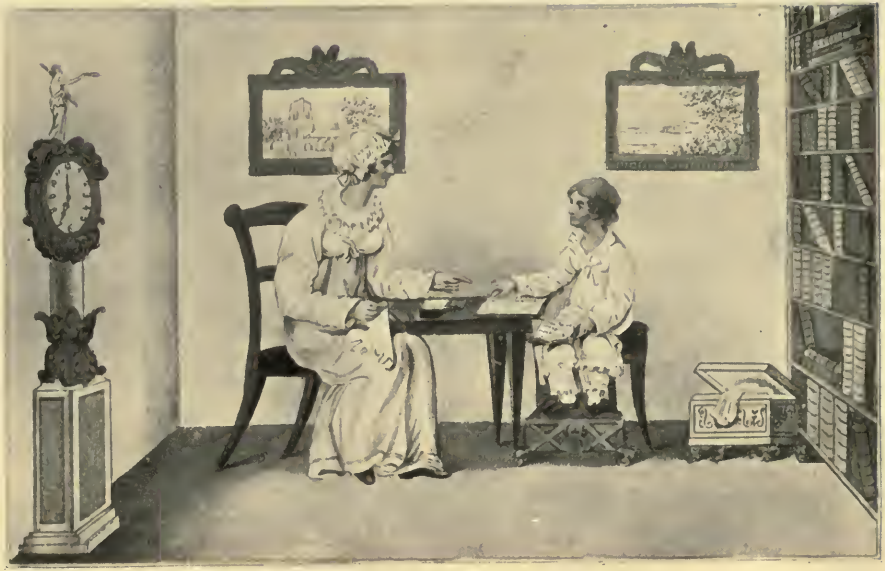
and

The Pocket Edition of the Works of Charles Lamb: I. Miscellaneous Prose; II. Elia; III. Children's Books; IV. Poems and Plays; V. and VI. Letters.



LAURA'S EARLY MORNING LESSONS

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THE PHANTOM JOURNAL

AND OTHER ESSAYS AND DIVERSIONS

BY

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THE PHANTOM JOURNAL

The Phantom Journal

NEW papers are not exactly an imperative need, although most of us could contrive a sheet nearer to our heart's desire than that which we find on the breakfast-table. But even though there may be papers enough, I should like just one more to get into circulation: or rather, I should like others to share my good fortune and be put on the free list of a similar organ. For its diligent perusal corrects all the others.

My paper is not a morning paper and not an evening paper (it has no 6.30 edition on sale in the streets at four o'clock) and it is not a weekly paper. It is that new thing, a nightly. One copy only is issued and that is for me, the sole peruser, and I get it in the very small hours. Nor do I get it with any regularity: its issue is the most capricious affair; but when it arrives I am enchanted. It has no title, or if it has I

have never noticed it, for I open right on to the news. But *The Adjuster* would describe it, or *The Alleviator*. And it has no leading article; only news. But such news! During the War it was almost too thrilling now and then. I dared not wake up. And even now, when all the blessings of Peace surround us, and overwhelm us, it can be exciting; for the editor, whoever he is, has so keen an eye, so pointed a finger, that he can discern and penetrate joints in the armour even of the Millennium.

Let me quote a little from last night's edition:—

Strange but not unwelcome news comes from a number of cathedral towns, where it has at last been decided to keep the cathedrals open all day, not only on week-days, but on Sundays, when poor people have their best, and sometimes their only, chance to see them. A few Deans and Chapters still hold out against what seems a not unreasonable proposal, particularly as the cathedrals are, in a manner of speaking, public property; but it is hoped that they may in time change this attitude. It has also been agreed that the sixpence fee for viewing the choir, which these same cathedrals have exacted for so many years—although the choir is not less the property of the public than the chancel and transepts are—shall henceforward not be charged.

And this:

Inquiries at Scotland Yard reveal the satisfactory but not surprising official information that no outbreak of theft, drunkenness, assault or murder has followed upon last Sunday afternoon's cricket match at Lord's. On the con-

trary, the Monday charge-sheets at the various Courts seem to have been lighter than usual. The great crowd assembled in an orderly manner, were delighted with the game, and dispersed happily to their homes. It is hoped that the perilous experiment of permitting spectacular cricket on the Day of Rest may therefore be tried again, and may in time lead to the honest utilization on Sundays of the public grounds in the parks and elsewhere, suburban bowling-greens, and so forth. In this connexion it may be noted, as an interesting circumstance, that of the minority who were against so revolutionary and subversive an innovation as a Sunday cricket match at Lord's (which seems to have been made possible chiefly by the Sunday American baseball matches during the War), every member is the possessor of a private lawn-tennis lawn on which he, his family and his friends, spend most of each fine week-end.

I omit a long article on the completed nationalization of hospitals and turn to the heading, "Literary Gossip":—

From time to time an occasional new letter of Charles Lamb comes to light, usually of the slightest. That some complete new batches still exist had been until to-day merely a fond hope with enthusiasts; but tidings now reach us of a packet of from thirty to forty, marked by all the writer's tenderness and fun, from Lamb to various members of the Burney family.

The "Art Notes" can also be almost too exciting. For instance:—

A telegram from Amsterdam states that in the house of an eccentric lady of great age, who has just died, and who for years would allow no callers, living alone with a single retainer—have been found a number of pictures by the leading Dutch masters of the seventeenth century, including no

fewer than three superb examples of the genius of Vermeer of Delft. The extreme rarity of this supreme artist's works has always been a matter of perplexity, for he began to paint early, lived into middle age and had a large family to provide for; yet up to the present fewer than forty pictures from his hand have been traced. These new ones are said to be of the most exquisite quality.

And again:—

We have the best authority for affirming the rumour that Lord Handsupp, before he presented his Rembrandt to the National Gallery, refused an offer of six figures from a foreign collector.

Political news is not much in the paper's line, but naturally it has to take notice of anything interesting. I quote the following passage from last night's issue:—

The Bill for the introduction of the Pari-Mutuel system into this country has now passed the Lords and will shortly become law. Racing henceforward not only will be as pleasant as it is in France, with none of the raucous din of the bookmakers and no swindling element, but gambling will automatically contribute both to the revenue and to charity, for the Chancellor of the Exchequer will take five per cent. and the Hospitals two-and-a-half.

Under "News from Far and Wide" is this:—

A Coventry man has invented a silent motor hooter.

And then the Court and Society information! What a charming account that was, only last night, of the Prince of Wales's engagement! Not

to a foreigner; not even an American; but an English girl through and through. How delighted every one seemed to be about it!

Even the obituary column can be refreshing; but I must not go into details.

The Fatherly Force

OUR city may be "the stony-hearted stepmother" that De Quincey called her, but we Londoners are not necessarily neglected orphans because of that. So long as one policeman remains, we shall never be fatherless.

If I were William Cowper, Esq., of Olney, I should put the following questions into melodious and easily-memorized verse; but instead they are in prose. Who is it, when we are lost, that tells us the way, always extending an arm as he does so? The policeman. Who is it that knows where the nearest chemist's is? The policeman. Who, when we are in danger of being run over if we cross the road, lifts a hand like a York ham and cleaves a path for us? The policeman. At night, when we have lost the latch-key, who is it that effects an entrance (I borrow his own terminology) through a window? The policeman. The tale of his benefactions is endless.

Two American girls recently in London spent much of their time in pretending to an ignorance

of the city, entirely (they confessed) in order to experience the delight of conversing with constables; and a lady once told me that the nicest men she had ever met (and she saw them every week) were the policemen in the Lost Umbrella Office on the Embankment. I believe it. I have the same feeling when I go there, and it bewilders me, remembering these fascinating officials, to think that the Foreign Office ever has any difficulty in appointing Ambassadors. Yet these too, with all their sympathy and suavity and sweet reasonableness, are policemen *au fond*. For the dark blue uniform is very powerful, and every man who dons the white worsted glove finds his hand turning to iron beneath it. Whatever he may have been before the Force absorbed him, he will henceforward side with order against disorder, with respectability against Bohemianism, with sobriety against vinous jollity. And yet the policemen make their allowances. I watched four of them the other day frog-marching a very "voilent" (as they always say in their evidence the next morning) reprobate from Burleigh Street to Bow Street. During the struggle he distributed some vicious kicks, but I could not determine by the constables' attitude, though they would, no doubt, have preferred a more tractable captive, that they felt any grudge

towards him, or thought him any worse than a meeker delinquent.

Although in real life the policeman is so monumentally respectable and solid, on the stage he is never anything but comic. *A Kiss for Cinderella* to some extent qualifies this; for the constable there with the "infalliable" system was romantical as well. But, generally speaking, a policeman's part is a comic part, and must be so. Tradition is too strong for anything else. Too many clowns in too many harlequinades have wreaked their mischievous will on him. Hence, whatever the play, directly we see him we begin to laugh; for we know that though the uniform is honourable, the voice will be funny. But in real life the police are serious creatures, while during the first three days of Armistice week, when they had to stand by and watch all kinds of goings-on for which no one was to be whopped, they were pathetic, too. Seldom can they have been so unhappy as when the bonfire was burning in the middle of Cockspur Street, and nothing could be done, or was permitted to be done.

London, I maintain, has few sublimer sights than a policeman doing his duty. I saw one yesterday. The window of the room which is principally devoted to my deeds of inkshed looks upon a point where four roads meet, on three of

which are omnibus routes. This means that there is never any lack of moving incident whenever I look out. Sometimes there is a moving accident, too. Yesterday, for example, hearing a warning call and a crash, I was at the window in time to see an omnibus and a small wagon inextricably mixed, and to watch with what celerity a crowd can assemble. But it was not that which drew the eye; it was the steady advance from a distant point of one of our helmeted fathers. He did not hurry: nothing but pursuit of the wicked fleeing makes a policeman run; but his onset was irresistible. Traffic rolled back from him like the waters of the Red Sea. When he reached the scene of trouble, where the motor-driver and the driver of the wagon were in ecstasies of *tu quoque*, while the conductor was examining the bonnet for damage and the passengers were wondering whether it was better to wait and work out their fares or change to another bus—when he reached the scene of trouble, he performed an action which never fails to fascinate me: he drew forth his pocket-book. There is something very interesting in the way in which a policeman does this. The gesture is mainly pride, but there is misgiving in it, too: the knowledge that the pen is not as mighty as the truncheon. But the pride is very evident: the satisfaction of Matter being

seen in association with Mind, like a voter whose hand has been shaken in public by a titled candidate. Policemen as a rule are laborious writers, and this one was true to type, but there is none that comes nearer the author of the Book of Fate. What a policeman writes, goes, as the Americans say.

One of the best stories of the fatherliness of the Fatherly Force that I ever heard was told to me by that elvish commentator on life, and most tireless of modern Quixotes, the late Robert Ross. He brought it, oddly enough, from St. Petersburg (as the Russian capital used to be called), and, when I urged him to write it, with characteristic open-handedness he presented it to me.

The heroine was a famous member of the Russian Imperial Ballet who, though she had not then danced in London—her genius being too precious in her own country—had been here unprofessionally as a sightseer; and it was here that the adventure which is the foundation of this narrative befell. From her own lips, at a supper party in St. Petersburg or Moscow, Ross had the tale, which now, but lacking all his personal enrichments, I tell again.

The dancer when in London had witnessed one of our processions: the opening of Parliament, the Lord Mayor's Show—I can't say what—and she

had found herself at a disadvantage in the crowd. It is unusual for *premières danseuses* to be tall, even when they are poised on the very tips of their conquering toes; and this lady was no exception. The result was that she could not see, and not to be able to see is for any woman a calamity, but for a foreign woman a tragedy: particularly so when she is in her own country a queen, accustomed to every kind of homage and attention. The *ballerina* was at the height of her despair when one of the policemen on duty took pity on her, and lifting her in his arms held her up long enough to enjoy the principal moments of the pageant. From that day onwards, she said, the London policeman was, for her, the symbol of strength and comfort and power. Gigantic Cossacks might parade before her all day, but her true god out of the machine was from Scotland Yard. . . .

A time came when, to the grief of her vast public, she fell ill. The Tsar's own physicians attended her, but she became no better, and at last it was realized that an operation was inevitable. Now, an operation is an ordeal which a *première danseuse* can dread with as much intensity as anyone else, and this poor little lady was terrified. Empresses of the ballet should be exempted from such trials. No, she vowed, she

could never go through with it. The idea was too frightening.

"But," said the first physician, "you must. It will only be a slight affair; you will come out of your convalescence better than before."

"Yes," said the second physician, "and more beautiful than before."

"And," urged the third physician, "more popular than before."

"And," added the surgeon, "you will live for ever."

But she still trembled and refused. . . . It was impossible, unthinkable. . . .

What then?

Well, let me say at once that, as a matter of fact, she underwent the operation with perfect fortitude, and it was a great success. But how do you think she brought herself to face it? Only by tightly holding the white gloved hand of a specially constructed doll of massive, even colossal, proportions, dressed in the uniform of a London policeman.

The Sparrows' Friend

IF you entered the Tuileries any fine morning (and surely the sun always shines in Paris, does it not?) by the gate opposite Frémiet's golden arrogant Joan of Arc, and turned into the gardens opposite the white Gambetta memorial, you were certain to see a little knot of people gathered around an old gentleman in a black slouch hat, with a deeply furrowed melancholy face, a heavy moustache, and the big comfortable slippers of one who (like so many a wise Frenchman) prefers comfort to convention or the outraged opinion of others. All about him, pecking among the grass of the little enclosed lawns, or in the gravel path at his feet, or fluttering up to his hands and down again, were sparrows—*les moineaux* — for this was M. Pol, the famous "*Charmeur d'oiseaux.*"

There is a certain attraction about Nôtre Dame, its gloom and its glass and its history; Sainte Chapelle is not without a polished beauty; the Louvre contains a picture or two and a statue or

two that demand to be seen and seen again; but this old retired civil servant with the magic power over the *gamins* of the Parisian roadways and chimney-stacks was far more magnetic to many a tourist. Those other of Baedeker's lions were permanent and would endure, but a frowsy unhappy old man in scandalous footwear who not only charmed the sparrows but quite clearly had confidential understandings with each was a marvel indeed and not to be missed. Nôtre Dame's twin towers on each side of that miracle of a rose window would be there next time; but would M. Pol? That is how we reasoned.

We did well to see him as often as we could, for he is now no more; he died in 1918.

For some time the old man had been missing from his accustomed haunts, through blindness, and Death found him at his home at Chandon-Lagache, in the midst of the composition of rhymes about his little friends, which had long been his hobby, and took him quite peacefully.

I have stood by M. Pol for hours, hoping to acquire something of his mystery; but these things come from within. He knew many of the birds by name, and he used to level terrible charges against them, as facetious uncles do with little nephews and nieces; but more French in character, that is all. One very innocent mite

—or as innocent as a Paris sparrow can be—was branded as L'Alcoolique. Never was a bird less of an inebriate, but no crumb or grain could it get except upon the invitation, *"Viens, prendre ton Pernod!"* Another was Marguerite, saucy baggage; another, La Comtesse; another, L'Anglais, who was addressed in an approximation to our own tongue. Now and then among the pigmies a giant pigeon would greedily stalk: welcome too. But it was with his sparrows that M. Pol was at his best—remonstrative, minatory, caustic; but always humorous, always tender beneath.

Latterly he sold a postcard now and then, with himself photographed on it amid verses and birds; but that was a mere side issue. Often strangers would engage him in conversation, and he would reply with the ready irony of France; but he displayed little interest. His heart was with those others. One felt that the more he saw of men the more he liked sparrows.

The French have a genius for gay commemorative sculpture. If a statue of M. Pol were set up on the scene of his triumphs (and many things are less likely), with little bronze *moineaux* all about him, I for one should often make it an object of pilgrimage.

The Perfect Guest

THERE are certain qualities which we all claim. We are probably wrong, of course, but we deceive ourselves into believing that, short as we may fall in other ways, we really can do this or that superlatively well. "I'll say this for myself," we remark, with an approving glance in the mirror, "at any rate I'm a good listener"; or, "Whatever I may not be, I'm a good host." These are things that may be asserted of oneself, by oneself, without undue conceit. "I pride myself on being a wit," a man may not say; or "I am not ashamed of being the handsomest man in London;" but no one resents the tone of those other arrogations, even if their truth is denied.

It is less common, although also unobjectionable, to hear people felicitate with themselves on being good guests. Indeed, I have lately met two or three who quite impenitently asserted the reverse; and I believe that I am of their company. I try very hard to be good, but can never lose sight of

the fact that my host's house is not mine. Fixed customs must be surrendered, lateness must become punctuality, cigarette ends must not burn the mantelpiece, one misses one's own China tea. The bathroom is too far and other people use it. There is no hook for the strop. In short, to be a really good guest and at ease under alien roofs it is necessary, I suspect, to have no home ties of one's own; certainly to have no very tyrannical habits.

I cut recently from the *Spectator* this rhymed analysis of the perfect guest:

> She answered, by return of post,
> The invitation of her host;
> She caught the train she said she would,
> And changed at junctions as she should;
> She brought a small and lightish box,
> And keys belonging to the locks.
> Food, rare and rich, she did not beg,
> But ate the boiled or scrambled egg;
> When offered lukewarm tea she drank it,
> And did not crave an extra blanket,
> Nor extra pillows for her head;
> She seemed to like the spare-room bed.
> She brought her own self-filling pen,
> And always went to bed at ten.
> She left no little things behind,
> But stories new and gossip kind.

Those verses seem to me to cover the ground, although one might want a change here and there. For example, would a little malice in her

London anecdotage be so undesirable? And a little less meekness in the lady, who comes out rather as a poor relation, might do no harm. They also might emphasize the point that she was never indisposed, for it is an unpardonable offence in a guest to be ill; that she spent a great deal of time in writing letters (which all hostesses like their guests to do); and that on returning home she sat down and composed a "roofer" in the warmest possible terms. They might touch lightly but feelingly on her readiness not only to eat what was offered, and not to desire luxuries, but to refuse the rarities, such as, in recent times, bacon and butter and sugar. ("Oh, no, I never take butter!"—what grateful words to fall on a hostess's ear!) One would not, however, have one's guest a vegetarian, because that way distraction lies. If vegetarians ate vegetables all might be well, but they don't; they want made dishes of an exotic nature, or hostesses think they do, and then the cook gives notice. The verses might also refer to the perfect guest's easy flow of conversation when neighbouring bores call; and last—but how far from least!—they might note the genuine ring in her voice when she volunteers to do a little weeding.

But the lines, as far as they go, are comprehensive; their defect is that they deal with but

one type—a woman visiting in the country. There is also to be considered the woman from the country visiting in town, who, to be perfect, must not insist too strongly on her own choice of play, must not pine inordinately for dances, and must not bring more frocks than her hostess can keep pace with. Mention of the hostess reminds me that it is by a hostess that the verses obviously were written, and that, as such, they leave apertures which the arrows of censure might penetrate if we were considering the perfect hostess too. For how could the poet, for all her epigrammatic conciseness, ever have given her exemplary friend the opportunity of drinking lukewarm tea? In any catalogue of the perfect hostess's virtues a very high place must be reserved for that watchfulness over the teapot and the bell that prevents such a possibility. And the perfect hostess is careful, by providing extra blankets, to make craving for more unnecessary. She also places by the bed biscuits, matches, and a volume either of O. Henry or "Saki," or both.

The Green among the Grey

EACH autumn I am more and more aware, as I grow older and the summers ahead of me decrease in number, of summer's beauty, and each May I am more and more aware of the beauty of the spring that all too quickly has rushed into full leaf; and to my mind London's greatest spring beauty is lent her by her plane trees: beauty both of leaf and of stem, for there is no more lovely colour, on the quiet restrained side, than that pale yellow which the falling bark reveals.

The London plane has a special advantage over other trees in growing where it is most wanted. The maimed elms of Kensington Gardens, for example, grow where already there is a waste of greenery, but the plane trees which I have particularly in my mind at this moment grow among bricks and brush the sides of houses with their branches. From a balloon the leaves of these trees, making—from that altitude, immediately above—verdant pools among the red

and grey of the roofs, must strike the eye very graciously. In no balloon have I ever set foot, and hope not to, but having ascended St. Paul's and other eminences I am familiar with something of the same effect.

Looking down on London from a great height in the City — from the Monument, say — the impression received is a waste of blackened grey with infrequent and surprising spots of herbage to lighten it. Looking down on London from a great height in the West-end—from the campanile of the Westminster Cathedral, for instance —the impression is of greenness first and dark grey after, for almost immediately below are St. James's Park and Green Park and the gardens of Buckingham Palace, and, quite near, the rolling acres of the Hyde. That is in summer. In winter the City prospect changes, for since most of its green is the green of the leaf, little but the blackened grey is left through the smoke. The western prospect, however, remains much the same, although more sombre, for most of its green is the green of grass. If one would see both scenes at their smilingest, but particularly the City, climb the Monument (it has only 345 of the steepest steps) in mid May. For London's green in mid May is the country's green in mid June, such a hurry is the Old Lady in.

None the less, in spite of her plentiful verdancy, the first thought of London which the alien, and even perhaps many a Londoner, has is of blackened grey only. To these a map, with all the oases coloured, would be a great surprise, and a census of London's trees a greater. In certain western parts she is as truly a garden city as could be asked, and even in the heart of her, where streets are all asphalt and so narrow that two vehicles cannot pass, a man who wagered that a steady walker could not travel all day in summer and see no leaves within every four minutes would win his bet. Indeed, there is one fortnight of the year—it is also in May—when one discovers again that London is at heart a forest city.

I am not sure that the occasional glimpses of her trees are not the best. The parks can be perhaps a shade too monotonously green: they are too big; they might be in the country; but the delicate branches that feel for the light among the masonry have a quality all their own, given to them largely by contrast.

How soon this forest city of ours would revert to the wild, if only her citizens ceased to fret her and keep Nature under, we had a chance of learning when the Aldwych site was laid bare some few years since. Instantly from the ruins

sprang a tangle of vegetation, with patches of flowers among it, rooting themselves in a mysterious way in nothing more nutritious than mortar, to the bewilderment and despair of all passing gardeners who with such pains and patience coax blossoms to flourish in prepared soil. Perhaps an even more striking instance of the fertility of London stone was observable when the Stamford Bridge ground was reopened towards the end of the War for the American baseball matches, and we found that, left to their own devices, the raised platforms, all of solid concrete, had become terraced lawns.

But the plane tree, who is my hero at the moment, awaits his eulogy. It is as though Nature, taking pity on commercial man, had given him this steady companion on his lonely money-making way: "Go," said she to the plane tree, "and befriend this sordid duffer. No matter how hard the ground, how high the surrounding houses, how smoke-covered the sun, how shattering the traffic, how neglectful the passers-by, I will see that you flourish. It is your mission to alleviate the stones. You shall put forth your leaves early and hold them late to remind him that life is sweet somewhere, and to cheer him with the thought that some day, when he has made money enough, and

come to his senses, he may breathe sweet air again."[1]

Nature's choice was very wise, for the plane tree, above all others, seems to have the gift of distributing a pervading greenness. As well as being green itself, it tinges the circumambient atmosphere with green. If one doubts this, let him visit Pump Court in the Temple, where two trees absolutely flood with leaves a parallelogram of masonry. But if Pump Court is more than lit by two plane trees, Cheapside in the summer takes heart from one only—that famous tree which springs from a tiny courtyard at the corner of Wood Street, and, although lopped back almost to a sign-post some few years ago, is again a brave portent of the open world to all the merchants of Chepe and their customers. It has been suggested that it was the greenness of this tree, a century and more earlier, that at this same Wood Street corner set Wordsworth's Poor Susan upon her dream of rural joys. Whether it is old enough for that, I know not; but I like the idea.

Such is the value of her ground that London City proper has necessarily to be content with

[1] Honour where honour is due; and Nature, it must be admitted, has very valuable allies in the Metropolitan Public Gardens Associations.

minute oases, and travelling eastwards one must go a long way before one comes to a real expanse comparable with the pleasaunces of the west. The cemetery of Bunhill Fields is the largest until Victoria Park is reached — that really necessary park which has such hard usage that there are acres of it without a blade of grass left. Here the East both apes the West and instructs it. There is one lake here on which rowing boats incessantly ply and a motor launch used to make continual trips round an island with a Japanese temple on it for a penny a voyage; and there is another lake where thousands of little East-end boys bathe in the summer all day long. Now, the Serpentine in Hyde Park never had a motor launch, and bathing is allowed in it only before breakfast and at eve.

The best known of London's parks come where they are not wanted exceedingly. Hyde and St. James's and the Green Park and Kensington Gardens are all open spaces in areas where the streets are wide and the rooms large and light, and the poor can use and enjoy them only by walking some distance to do so, and then would probably rather be on Hampstead Heath with its absence of restrictions. But Victoria Park is emphatically the right park in

the right place. The West-enders, even without their parks, would still be healthy and moderately happy; but Victoria Park must literally have kept thousands upon thousands of children alive. So, to a smaller extent, must Battersea Park. And not long ago there was a movement afoot — now perhaps only suspended — to make yet another park where it is wanted: at Shadwell, on the site of a disused fish market adjoining the river and the docks, where the curiously squalid homes of Wapping may send forth their children for sun and air. The idea was to link the park with the memory of King Edward VII., and there could not be a wiser or more beneficent scheme. It is one, moreover, which he with his practical sympathy would have been the first to support. This park, if it becomes a reality, will be in one way the best of them all, for it will have a frontage on the busy part of the Thames, below the Pool, to give the children the sight of the great ships going by and thus open the world to them.

To what extent Victoria Park was surrendered to allotment holders during the War I cannot say; but if the activity was anything like that in Kensington Gardens the effect must be very striking. Kensington Palace seen from the road across a forest of beans and artichokes

and sunflowers was a wonderful and incredible sight — not perhaps so surprising as Lord Holland seated on his pedestal amid a riot of good garden stuff in his own park a little farther west, but nearly so.

Victoria Park's very special attraction, to me, is its bathing lake : one of the wonderful sights of London which very few central Londoners and no Americans have ever seen. Here boys rollick and frolic in their thousands, all stark and all more than happy, with the happiness that has to be expressed by action—in shouts and leaps and pursuit. On the hot August afternoon that I was last there, the sun, sinking through a haze, turned these ragamuffins to merboys and their skin to glory. The water is surrounded by trees; so that the mean and grimy streets which gave these urchins forth and were waiting to reclaim them again might have been as remote as Japan.

It was not only the most surprising spectacle —there, in the East-end—but the completest triumph of nakedness I ever dreamed of, for with nakedness had come not only beauty, but an ecstasy and irresponsibility as of the faun. "Time has run back and fetched the Age of Gold," I murmured as I watched them in their joy, gleaming and glistening. And then, half an hour after, as I sat by the path outside this

enchanted pool and watched them returning home, with their so lately radiant bodies covered with dirty clothes, and their little sleek, round heads shapeless with half-dried hair, and the horse-play of the arid park taking the place of the primeval gaieties and raptures of the water, I knew that the Age of Gold had passed.

Punctuality

AMONG my good resolutions for the New Year I very nearly included the determination never to be punctual again. I held my hand, just in time; but it was a near thing.

For a long while it had been, with me, a point of honour to be on time, and, possibly, I had become a little self-righteous on the matter, rebuking too caustically those with a laxer standard. But towards the close of 1918 doubts began to creep in. For one thing, modern conditions were making it very hard to keep engagements to the minute; taxis were scarce and trains and omnibuses crowded, so that in order to be punctual one had to walk and thus lose many precious minutes; for another, I had such a number of appointments which were not kept by the other parties that I had to take the matter into serious consideration, for they all meant disorganization of a rather exacting time-table at a period when I was unusually busy.

Moreover, while waiting for a late friend, it is impossible to do anything—one is too impatient or unsettled.

Why, I began to ask myself, should I do all the waiting and get hungry and cross, and why should they do all the arriving when everything is ready? Why should not the rôles be reversed?

When conscription came in and martial habits became the rule, I had hoped and believed that punctuality was really likely to be established. I thought this because one had always heard so much about Army precision, and also because my most punctual friend for many years had been a soldier and we had engaged in a rivalry in the matter. But I was wrong. During the War the soldiers home on leave took every advantage of one's gratitude to them, while the first demobilized one whom I entertained kept me waiting forty minutes for dinner.

The pity of it is that this particular tarrying guest is a man of eminence and capacity. Were he a failure, as according to our own Samuel Smiles or to the author of that famous American book *From Princeton College to Colonel House*, he ought to be, all would be well; but he is not; he has never been punctual in his life and he has had an exceptionally successful career. The

books tell us that the unpunctual man is disqualified in the race for fortune; that no one will employ him, no one will trust him. They say that the keeping of appointments is a test both of character and quality. Business men interviewing applicants for posts, they tell us, will engage no one, no matter what his attainments, who does not arrive promptly. But these hard and fast schemes of appraisement can, as I have shown, be all wrong. Wisdom, after all, is an element in business success; and what wise man would ever be punctual at his dentist's? What kind of respect a dentist has for his first appointment of the day, I cannot tell. I have avoided these early séances; but every one knows that he is never ready for a patient at the covenanted hour after that. Editors usually keep their visitors waiting. No theatrical manager has ever been on time; but then time does not exist for the stage, because, apart from their profession, actors have nothing to do. Rehearsals are one immense distracting outrage upon the routine of an ordered existence; and yet actors are a very happy folk.

Until late in 1918, as I have said, I had loved Punctualia with a true ardour; but I now found myself sufficiently free from passion to be able to examine her critically and to discern faults.

For there is a good deal to be said against her.

To be always correct is a dangerous thing. I have noticed that the people who are late are often so much jollier than the people who have to wait for them. Looking deeply into the matter, I realized that Punctualia, for all her complacency and air of rectitude, has lost a great many lives. The logic of the thing is inexorable. If you are late for the train, you miss it; and if you are not in it and it is wrecked, you live on—to miss others. I recalled one very remarkable case in point which happened in my own family circle. A relation of mine, with her daughter, had arranged to spend a holiday in the Channel Islands. A cabman promised and failed, arriving in time only to whip his horse all the way across London and miss the train by a minute. When, the next day, it was learned that the Channel Islands boat had struck the Casquettes and had gone down, the ladies were so excited by their escape that they sought the cabman and by way of gratitude adopted one of his numerous children. That is a true story, and it is surely a very eloquent supporter of an anti-punctual policy. Had the ladies caught the train they would have been drowned, and the cabman's bantling would have lacked any but the most elementary education.

Can you wonder, then, that I nearly included a determination never to be punctual again among my New Year resolutions? But I did not go so far. I left it at the decision not to be so particular about punctuality as I used to be.

The Other Two

IT is my good or ill fortune to have taken a furnished flat at a dizzy altitude in the neighbourhood of a terminus which is at once nearest the sea and the Promised Land. Immediately above the flat is a spacious roof, which affords a pleasant retreat in the cool of the evening and commands what the agents call an extensive prospect, and where, at most hours, toy dogs may be met. The flat itself consists of a number of rooms the walls of which are covered with photographs of men, women, and children, almost as thickly as the pages of a schoolboy's album are covered with stamps. There are more men than women, and more women than children. The men have obsolete beards; several of the women seem to be sisters, and have been taken together with their heads inclining towards each other at an affectionate angle, which, although affectionate, does not render the thought impossible that each sister secretly is convinced that she is the handsomer. There are also

sets of children graduated like organ pipes. These photographs not only hang on the walls but they swarm in frames about the mantelpieces and the occasional tables. The occasional tables are so numerous and varied in size that one might imagine this their stud farm.

The beginning of my tenancy was marked by a tragedy. The larder window having been left open by the previous occupants, a large slate-coloured pigeon, having plans for a family, had made a nest and laid an egg in it, and, at the very moment when I suddenly opened the door, was preparing to lay another. To this achievement I personally should have had no objection; but the porter, who was showing me round, and who has a sense of decorum more proper to such apartments, had other views, and before I could interfere he had removed the egg, brushed away the nest, and closed the window. That ended his share of the drama; but mine was to begin, for ever since that day the pigeon, with a depth of reproachfulness in its eyes that is extremely distressing, has sat on the kitchen window-sill making desperate efforts to get in, so that I creep about feeling like Herod. During Baby Week it was almost unbearable. Even when I am far from the kitchen I can hear its plaintive injured cooing.

The flat is conspicuous in possessing, in addition to numerous other advantages, such as a night porter to work the lift, who is never visible, and a day porter who, having been forbidden by the powers that be to use the lift before two o'clock in the afternoon, scrupulously obeys the new regulation, except when he has to ascend to an upper floor himself: the flat has, in addition to these advantages, windows that refuse to be lifted by any but a Hercules, and doors (ten in all) not one of which will remain open except by artificial means. Whether or not this is a peculiarity of Westminster architecture I cannot say, but all the doors are alike. They each quickly but remorselessly close, yet so gently that the latch does not catch, and every breath of draught (and we by no means stop at breaths) sways them noisily to and fro with a sound that is excessively irritating to the nerves. I have therefore either to go to the door and fasten it or find something with which to fix it open. Normally, I use a chair or a weight from the kitchen scales; but two of the rooms—the drawing-room, where the occasional tables are most fecund, and the dining-room, where I do everything but dine—are supplied with door-stops of their own, consisting each of an elephant's foot mounted with brass. Picture me then, the most Occi-

dental of men and so long a devotee of the study and the shelf as to be less of a big-game hunter than anyone you could imagine, moving about this intensely sophisticated flat carrying from room to room the foot of a mammoth of the Indian jungle or the African forest (I don't know which) in order to prevent a London door from banging. Imperial Cæsar's destiny was not less exalted or more incongruous.

If there were four of these feet I should be more at ease. But there are only two of them, and elephants are quadrupeds. Where then are the other two? That is the question which is wearing me out. I lie awake at night, wondering, and then falling into an uneasy sleep hear a heavy stumbling tread on the stairs and wake in terror expecting the door to burst open and the other half of the elephant to advance upon me demanding its lost feet. It is always a dreadful nightmare, but never more so than when the mammoth not only towers up grey and threatening, but coos like an exiled pigeon.

Thoughts at the Ferry

MY acquaintance among ferrymen is not extensive, but I cannot remember any that were cheerful. Perhaps there are none. The one over there, on the other side, who is being so deliberate—he certainly has no air of gaiety.

There is a wealth of reasons for this lack of mirth. To begin with, a boat on a river is normally a vehicle of pleasure; but the ferryman's boat is a drudge. Then, the ordinary course of a boat on a river is up or down, between banks that can provide excitement, and around bends, each one of which may reveal adventure; but the ferryman's boat must constantly cross from side to side, always from the same spot to the same spot and back again, which is subversive of joy. All that the ferryman knows of the true purposes of a river he gains from observation of others, who gaily pass him, pulling with the stream or against it, and singing, perhaps, as they row. Did a ferryman ever sing? There was, when I was a boy, a pretty song about Twickenham Ferry, but

my recollections of it are that it was the passenger who sang: not, I fancy, in the boat, but before he entered it. If my memory is right, the fact is significant. In the company of such taciturnity and gloom, who could carol?

The ferryman, again, must never leave his post. All the world may go wayfaring, but not he. To cross a river is in itself nothing; but to come, from somewhere unknown, to the bank of the river, cross it, and pass on to unknown bournes on the other side—that is an enterprise, and that is what every one but the ferryman is doing. I have written before—it is a recurring theme of sympathy—of the servants of the traveller who live by helping him on his eventful way but never participate in any wanderings — railway porters, for example—and the ferryman is perhaps chief, because so much of the very matter of romance—a running stream—comes into his daily routine. There he is, in the open air, with the breeze to fan and lure him, and the racing clouds to lift his thoughts, and the exciting sound of water in his ears: all the enticements to rove, but he must not be a rover. For the rest of us (as it must seem to him), exploration; for himself, the narrow confines of the known!

And it is a peculiarity of ferrymen that when you want them they are (like this reluctant fellow)

always on the other side. Not from any natural desire to annoy, but through a whim of the gods; yet how it must add fuel to their misanthropic fire! If every journey were with a fare, the ferryman might be a shade more cheerful, even though the payment is so trifling. Was there ever a rich ferryman? Has a whimsical millionaire ever played at being a ferryman? Has a Carnegie ever left a ferryman a legacy?

And then the brevity of their companionships! Not that most ferrymen seem to desire human intercourse; but perhaps they did once, before the monotony of their task soured them. Down to the boat come the strangers from the great world—young or old, forbidding or beautiful, ardent or pensive—and howsoever the ferryman would like to hold them and talk with them, no sooner does the boat touch the farther bank than they are off again! Does not that make for a certain moroseness?

And what was the ferryman before he was a ferryman? For seldom, I should guess, is his an hereditary post. Some kind of failure normally precedes; and there again is cause for reticence.

Such friends as ferrymen possess are usually dumb animals. I have known more than one who carried his dog with him; and once, on the Wye, I met one whose companion was a goose.

No matter how often the crossing had to be made, the goose made it too. I used the ferry several times, and we were never without this escort; and the ferryman (who, I am bound to remark, humiliating though it be, propelled his boat from side to side, not with honest oars, but by means of a rope) emerged sufficiently from his apathy to praise the bird's fidelity. "Here," thought I, "is surely the material for a pertinent apologue. 'The Ferryman and the Goose': the very title is Æsopian. Or—to be more satirical—the title might be 'The Ferryman and the Swan,' the point being that he thought it was a swan, but in reality it was only a goose." But I had no further inspiration. And yet, by a practised homilist, a good deal could be done with it with which to score off poor human nature. "Ah! my friends"—surely it is fittest for the pulpit, after all?—"Ah! my friends, may not each of us be as much in error as that poor deluded ferryman? Let us search our hearts and answer truthfully the questions: Do we know our friends as we ought? Does not their flattery perhaps blind us to their mediocrity? In short, are they swans or geese?"

Ferrymen——

But here is our man at last! On close inspection, how dismal he looks!

New Glimpses of Borrow

THE veteran of the gloves who, his bruising done, now occupies the editorial chair of *The Mirror of Life and Boxing World,* a little weekly paper full of the spirited appraisement of champions of every weight, recently gave his readers something a little out of the ordinary, in his reminiscences of the author of *Lavengro.* Mr. Bradley—for that is the editor's name—knew Borrow well in later days, and talked fights with him by the hour, and until the last year or so when we have all been forced by the twin goddesses Bellona and Dora to abandon many of the best habits, never allowed himself to pass the Castle Tavern in Holborn without drinking a cup of ale to his old friend's memory.

Their meeting was in the Isle of Man in the eighteen-seventies, when Borrow, although still vigorous, had already passed the allotted span, and Mr. Bradley acted as his guide up and down Manxland. "He was then as fine a specimen of a man as anyone could wish to see. He

stood six feet two inches in his stockings; his frame was of colossal strength, his hair perfectly white, and his face naturally smooth, without a vestige of whisker or moustache. But perhaps the most remarkable feature about Borrow was his eyes—so dark and piercing."

One gathers from Mr. Bradley's remarks that upon Borrow the open air was exercising more than its usual spell, as though, time growing short, every moment had to be lived doubly. As a walker he was, of course, amazing, even at that age, over seventy, thinking nothing (and yet thinking everything) of walking for twelve hours a day at an average of little under five miles an hour; while when Borrow swam, says Mr. Bradley —but "swam" is not the word, for the sea provided him with ecstasies of movement beyond all ordinary natation—when Borrow swam, at one time he "rolled and disported himself like a porpoise," and at another "pawed the water like a dog." Although so far from youth, even in winter he would plunge into the Fen Pond in Richmond Park and traverse the whole length. This may not be news to those who have gone at all deeply into Borrow's life, but it is stimulating to have it afresh on such authority, and the gratitude of Borrovians to Mr. Bradley should be great.

Mr. Bradley's recollections of Borrow's conversation include a priceless contribution to the fine art of coping. Let me quote:—

A famous Yorkshire horse-dealer once asked him:—

"Now, how would you, Mr. Romany Rye, pass off the veriest screw in the world for a flying dromedary?"

"By putting a live eel down his throat; as long as the eel remained in his stomach the horse would be brisk and lively in a surprising degree."

"And how," continued the knowing Tyke, "would you make a regular kicker and biter appear so tame and gentle that any fat old gentleman of sixty who wanted an easy-goer would be glad to give fifty pounds for him?"

"By pouring down his throat four pints of generous old ale, which would make him so happy and comfortable that he would not have the heart to kick or bite anybody, for a season at least."

That has the authentic note. But authenticity is the mark of the whole article. Take, for example, such a passage as this (the reference having nothing to do with melancholy's anatomist: quite the reverse): "Borrow loved old Burton and '37 port, but nevertheless he would drink whatever he came across on the road, as if out of perversity, to insist on his iron constitution bearing whatever he chose to impose on it. And oh! how he hated the teetotallers! 'Some cants are not dangerous,' he once said, 'but a more dangerous cant than the temperance cant, or, as it is generally called, teetotalism, is not to be found.'" Holding such views, it is natural

enough that Borrow's indefatigable feet took him naturally into many an inn, of which one of his favourites was the Bald-faced Stag at Roehampton, where Mr. Bradley has listened to his eulogies of all highwaymen in general and Jerry Abershaw in particular. Borrovians may like to make a note of this tavern as a point of pilgrimage.

Mr. Bradley has seen the old man also in his Oulton home, but happily before his last clouded days. "In that quiet retreat," says Mr. Bradley, "it seems to me that he thoroughly realized the words of the old song of which he was so fond:—

'Give me a haunch of a buck to eat, and to drink Madeira old,
And a gentle wife to rest with, and in my arms to fold,
An Arabic book to study, a Norfolk cob to ride,
A house to live in, shaded with trees, and near to a river-side;
With such good things around me, and blessed with good health withal,
Though I should live for a hundred years, for death I would not call.'"

The Man of Ross

I HAVE several reasons for remembering Ross, but the first is that a visit to that grey hillside town sent me to the authorities for more particulars concerning John Kyrle. Others are the intensity and density of the rain that can fall in Herefordshire; the sundial on Wilton Bridge; and the most elementary Roman Catholic chapel I ever saw—nothing but a bare room—made, however, when I pushed open the door on that chill and aqueous afternoon, cheerful and smiling by its full complement of votive candles all alight at once. In the honour of what Saint they burned so gaily, like a little mass meeting of flames, I cannot say, but probably the Gentle Spirit of Padua, who not only befriends all tender young things but, it is notorious, if properly approached, can find again whatever you have lost; and most people have lost something. I remember Ross also because I had Dickens's Letters (that generous feast) with me, and behold! on the wall of the hotel, whose name I forget but which overlooks the

sinuous Wye, was his autograph and an intimation that under that very roof—more hospitable then, in the eighteen-sixties, than in the rationing period of my sojourn—the novelist had arranged with John Forster the details of his last American tour.

But these are digressions. The prime boast of Ross is that it had a Man; and this Man is immanent. You cannot raise your eyes in Ross without encountering a reminder of its Manhood, its Manliness; and the uninstructed, as they wander hither and thither, naturally become more and more curious as to his identity: how he obtained the definite article so definitely, and what was his association with the place.

I cannot lay claim personally to total uninstruction. I remembered faintly Pope's lines which made the fame of the Man, but I retained only a general impression of them as praising a public benefactor who did astonishing things on a very small income, and thus was to put to shame certain men of wealth in Pope's day who did for their fellow creatures nothing at all. But nowhere could I find the lines. The guide-books refer to them lightly as though they were in every consciousness, and pass on. No shop had a copy of Pope; none of the picture postcards quoted them; they were not on the monument in the church; they were nowhere in the hotel.

And this is odd, because it was probably not until the illustrious London poet had set the seal of his approval on their late townsman and benefactor that the people of Ross realized not only how very remarkable had he been, but also that to be associated with such a personage might mean both distinction and profit. For the phrase "The Man of Ross" is now everywhere: he who once fathered orphans and the unfortunate now spreads his cloak over tea-shops, inns, and countless commercial ventures.

Here, however, is the passage, from the third *Moral Epistle.* (Pope, it will be recalled, is moralizing on riches, in metrical conversation with Lord Bathurst):—

P. Rise, honest Muse! and sing the Man of Ross:
Pleased Vaga echoes through her winding bounds,
And rapid Severn hoarse applause resounds.
Who hung with woods yon mountain's sultry brow?
From the dry rock who bade the waters flow?
Not to the skies in useless columns tost,
Or in proud falls magnificently lost,
But clear and artless, pouring through the plain
Health to the sick and solace to the swain.
Whose causeway parts the vale with shady rows?
Whose seats the weary traveller repose?
Who taught that heaven-directed spire to rise?
"The Man of Ross," each lisping babe replies.
Behold the market-place with poor o'erspread!
The Man of Ross divides the weekly bread;
He feeds yon almshouse, neat, but void of state,
Where Age and Want sit smiling at the gate;

Him portioned maids, apprenticed orphans, blessed
The young who labour, and the old who rest.
Is any sick? The Man of Ross relieves,
Prescribes, attends, the med'cine makes and gives.
Is there a variance? enter but his door,
Balk'd are the courts, and contest is no more.
Despairing Quacks with curses fled the place,
And vile attorneys, now an useless race.

B. Thrice happy man! enabled to pursue
What all so wish, but want the power to do!
Oh say, what sums that generous hand supply?
What mines, to swell that boundless charity?

P. Of Debts and Taxes, Wife and Children clear,
This man possest—five hundred pounds a year.
Blush, Grandeur, blush! proud Courts, withdraw your blaze!
Ye, little Stars! hide your diminished rays

B. And what? no monument, inscription, stone?
His race, his form, his name almost unknown?

P. Who builds a church to God, and not to fame,
Will never mark the marble with his name:
Go, search it there,[1] where to be born and die,
Of rich and poor makes all the history;
Enough, that Virtue filled the space between;
Prov'd, by the ends of being, to have been.

If the impression conveyed by those lines is that the Man of Ross was more of a saint than a Herefordshire squire, the fault is the poet's and in part his medium's. The Augustan couplet tended to a heightening, dehumanising effect. As a matter of fact, John Kyrle would seem to have soared not at all: the plainest and most direct of men, he took to altruism and municipal

[1] In the Parish Register.

improvements very much as his neighbours took to agriculture or cock-fighting. It was his amusement or hobby to make Ross a more livable-in place.

But before the poem is examined more closely, let me give the outline of John Kyrle's life. His father was Walter Kyrle of Ross, a barrister and J.P., and M.P. for Leominster in the Long Parliament. John was born on May 22nd, 1637, and educated at Ross Grammar School and Balliol College. He then passed on to the Middle Temple, but on succeeding to his father's property, worth about £600 a year, he settled down at Ross and commenced philanthropy, and never relaxed his efforts until his death many years later. He lived in the house opposite the very charming Market-hall, unmarried, and cared for by a relation named Miss Judith Bubb. He sat commonly in a huge and very solid chair, established on its stout legs like a rock, which I saw not long since in the window of Mr. Simmonds' old curiosity shop in Monmouth, where it serves as a show and a lure. According to a portrait of the Man of Ross which exists, made surreptitiously (for he would have none of your limners) as he sat at worship, he was tall, broad-shouldered, of sanguine complexion, with a big nose. He wore a brown suit and a short bushy wig, and he had a

loud voice. He visited a dame's school once a week, and on hearing of any delinquency would reprimand the infant in these words: "Od's bud, Od's bud, but I will mend you!" A burly man with a red face, big nose, and loud voice speaking thus might, to the young, be a too terrifying object, but we must guess that John Kyrle tempered the wind. *The Dictionary of National Biography* says that although tradition gives Kyrle credit for releasing poor debtors and starting them on new careers, and that although for so long, as Pope tells us, he stood between attorney and litigant, the law was ultimately too much for him, and he too became involved in a suit. He lived to be eighty-seven, dying of sheer old age on 7th November 1724. His body lay in state in the church of Ross for nine days, and was then buried without a head-stone.

For the prose of Kyrle's life and achievements, as distinguished from Pope's poetry, we have to go first to the diary of Thomas Hearn the antiquary. Under the date April 9th, 1732-33, Hearn writes: "He (John Kirle or Kyrle) was a very humble, good-natured man. He was a man of little or no literature. He always studied to do what good charitable offices he could, and was always pleased when an object offered. He was reverenced and respected by all people. He

used to drink and entertain with cider, and was a sober discreet man. He would tell people when they dined or supped with him that he could (if they pleased) let them have wine to drink, but that his own drink was cider, and that he found it most agreeable to him, and he did not care to be extravagant with his small fortune. His estate was five hundred pounds per annum, and no more, with which he did wonders. He built and endowed a hospital, and built the spire of Ross. When any litigious suits fell out, he would always stop them and prevent people's going to law. They would, when differences happened, say, go to 'the great man of Ross,' or, which they did more often, go to 'the man of Ross,' and he will decide the matter. He left a nephew, a man good for little or nothing. He would have given all from him, but a good deal being entailed he could not. He smoked tobacco, and would generally smoke two pipes if in company, either at home or elsewhere."

A year later Hearn corrected certain of these statements. Thus: "1734. April 16. Mr. Pope had the main of his information about Mr. Kirle, commonly called *the Man of Ross* (whom he characterizeth in his poem of the 'Use of Riches') from Jacob Tonson the bookseller, who hath purchased an estate of about a thousand a

year, and lives in Herefordshire, a man that is a great, snivelling, poor-spirited whigg, and good for nothing that I know of. Mr. Brome tells me in his letter from Ewithington on November 23rd, 1733, that he does not think the truth is strained in any particulars of the character, except it be in his being founder of the church and spire of Ross . . . but he was a great benefactor; and at the re-casting of the bells gave a tenor, a large bell. Neither does Mr. Brome find he was founder of any hospital, and he thinks his knowledge in medicine extended no further than kitchen physick, of which he was very liberal, and might thereby preserve many lives.

"April 18. Yesterday Mr. Matthew Gibson, minister of Abbey Dore in Herefordshire, just called upon me. I asked him whether he knew Mr. Kirle, commonly called *the Man of Ross*. He said he did very well, and that his (Mr. Matthew Gibson's) wife is his near relation; I think he said he was her uncle. I told him the said *Man of Ross* was an extraordinary charitable generous man, and did much good. He said he did do a great deal of good, but that was all out of vanity and ostentation, being the vainest man living, and that he always hated his relations and would never look upon, or do anything for them, though many of them were very poor. I know

not what credit to give to Mr. Gibson in that account, especially since this same Gibson hath more than once, in my presence, spoke inveterately against that good honest man Dr. Adam Ottley, late Bishop of St David's. Besides, this Gibson is a crazed man, and withall stingy, though he be rich, and hath no child by his wife."

Another authority, more or less a contemporary, on the Man of Ross was Thomas Hutcheson, barrister, a descendant who became the owner of Kyrle's property. According to him Pope's questioning line :—

Who hung with woods yon mountain's sultry brow?

rather too sumptuously covers the planting of a "long shady walk, of nearly a mile and a half . . . called Kyrle's Walks, on the summit of the eminence commanding a beautiful prospect of the Wye." The poet's next query :—

From the dry rock who bade the waters flow?

is answered thus: "The Man of Ross promoted, and partly assisted by his own pecuniary aid, the erection of a small water work near the river Wye, which supplied the town of Ross with water, in which article it was very deficient before." A further commentary was drawn from Mr. Hutcheson by the couplet :—

Behold the market-place with poor o'erspread!
The Man of Ross divides the weekly bread.

"He kept open house every market-day; any person without distinction might meet on that day at his hospitable board, which, according to the stories related to me by some old tenants, consisted of a joint of meat of each sort. The poor, who were always in waiting on that day, and every other, had distributed to them, by his own superintendence, the whole of the remains of each day, besides continual distributions of bread, etc."

As to Pope's question:—

Whose causeway parts the vale with shady rows?

it seems that the poet was desperately out. The causeway connecting the town with the river dated from before the fourteenth century, but Kyrle probably saw to its proper maintenance.

Finally, let us see what the Sage of Fleet Street has to say to the statement:—

The Man possest—five hundred pounds a year,

and its implication that everything was done on that sum. In the critical notice of Pope in *The Lives of the Poets*, Dr. Johnson remarks: "Wonders are willingly told and willingly heard. The truth is, that Kyrle was a man of known integrity and active benevolence, by whose solicitation the wealthy were persuaded to pay contributions to his charitable schemes; this influence

he obtained by an example of liberality exerted to the utmost extent of his power, and was thus enabled to give more than he had. This account Mr. Victor received from the Minister of the place, and I have preserved it, that the praise of a good man being made more credible, may be more solid. Narrations of romantic and impracticable virtue will be read with wonder, but that which is unattainable is recommended in vain; that good may be endeavoured, it must be shown to be practicable."

So much for all the advocates—angeli and diaboli! But I think we need pay little attention to Mr. Gibson's testimony. Even though he were in part right, and a tinge of self-esteem or love of applause crept into the Man's benefactions, they remain benefactions no less, costing him as much money, and reaching the same goals. But away with such belittlings! Let us rather remember that the Rev. Matthew Gibson was crazed, stingy withal, and had no child by his wife. Personally I agree with my friend Mr. A. L. Humphreys, who has put it on record that, in his belief, it would be a good thing if every parish had a Man of Ross in preference to a parson. No harm necessarily in a parson as well, but the Man is more important.

What no one tells us is, by whom and when the

munificent Mr. Kyrle was first called the Man of Ross. Although Pope made his fame, he did not invent this term for him; he merely passed it on and fixed it in literature. This we know from a paragraph in the *News Letter* of November 19th, 1724, years before Pope wrote, recording the death of "John Kyrle, Esq., in the 88th year of his age, called by way of excellency 'The Man of Ross.'"

Pope was perfectly aware that he over, rather than under, stated his case. Writing to Tonson when the third *Moral Epistle* was still in the course of completion, to thank him for the details of information about the Man of Ross, he said (the date is June 1732): "They are more than sufficient for my honest purpose of setting up his fame as an example to greater and wealthier men how they ought to use their fortunes. You know few of these particulars can be made to shine in verse, but I have selected the most affecting, and added two or three which I learned from other hands. A small exaggeration you must allow me as a Poet, yet I was determined the groundwork at least should be truth, which made me so scrupulous in my enquiries, and sure, considering that the world is bad enough to be always extenuating and lessening what virtue is among us, it is but reasonable to pay if sometimes

a little over measure to balance that injustice, especially when it is done for example and encouragement to others. If any man shall ever happen to endeavour to emulate the Man of Ross, 'twill be no manner of harm if I make him think he was something more charitable and more beneficent than really he was, for so much more good it would put the imitator upon doing, and further I am satisfied in my conscience (from ye strokes in two or three accounts I have of his character) that it was in his will and in his heart to have done every good a Poet can imagine.

"My motive in singling out this man was two-fold. First to distinguish real and solid worth from showish or plausible expense, and virtue from vanity; and secondly to humble the pride of greater men, by an opposition of one so obscure and so distant from all ye sphere of public glory—this proud town. To send you any of the particular verses will be much to the prejudice of the whole, which, if it has any beauty, derives it from the manner in which it is *Placed* as ye *contraste* (as ye Painters call it) in which it stands with ye pompous figures of famous or rich or highborn men.

"I was not sorry he had no monument, and will put that circumstance into a note, perhaps into the body of the Poem itself (unless you entreat

the contrary in your own favour by your zeal to erect one). I would, however, in this case spare your censure upon his Heir (so well as he deserves it), because I daresay after seeing his picture everybody will turn that circumstance to his honour, and conclude the Man of Ross himself would not have any monument in memory of his own good name."

I am not aware whether it was Tonson who set up the monument in Ross church; but one is to be seen there, on the north wall of the chancel, near the slab that now marks the site of the Man's burial.

At least one more poetical tribute from genius did John Kyrle win. Among the *Juvenile Poems* of Samuel Taylor Coleridge is this:—

Lines written at the King's Arms, Ross, formerly the house of the "Man of Ross."

Richer than Miser o'er his countless hoards,
Nobler than Kings, or king-polluted Lords,
Here dwelt the Man of Ross! O, Traveller, hear!
Departed Merit claims a reverent tear.
Friend to the friendless, to the sick man health,
With generous joy he viewed his modest wealth;
He heard the widow's heaven-breathed prayer of praise,
He marked the sheltered orphan's tearful gaze,
Or where the sorrow-shrivelled captive lay,
Poured the bright blaze of Freedom's noon-tide ray.
Beneath this roof if thy cheered moments pass,
Fill to the good man's name one grateful glass:
To higher zest shall Memory wake thy soul,
And Virtue mingle in the ennobled bowl.

But if, like me, through life's distressful scene
Lonely and sad thy pilgrimage hath been;
And if thy breast with heart-sick anguish fraught,
Thou journeyest onward tempest-tossed in thought;
Here cheat thy cares! in generous visions melt,
And dream of goodness thou hast never felt!

The sad and lonely poet, tempest-tossed in thought, who wrote those lines, was then twenty-one, on a walking tour with his friend Hucks, trying to construct Pantisocracy and forget Mary Evans.

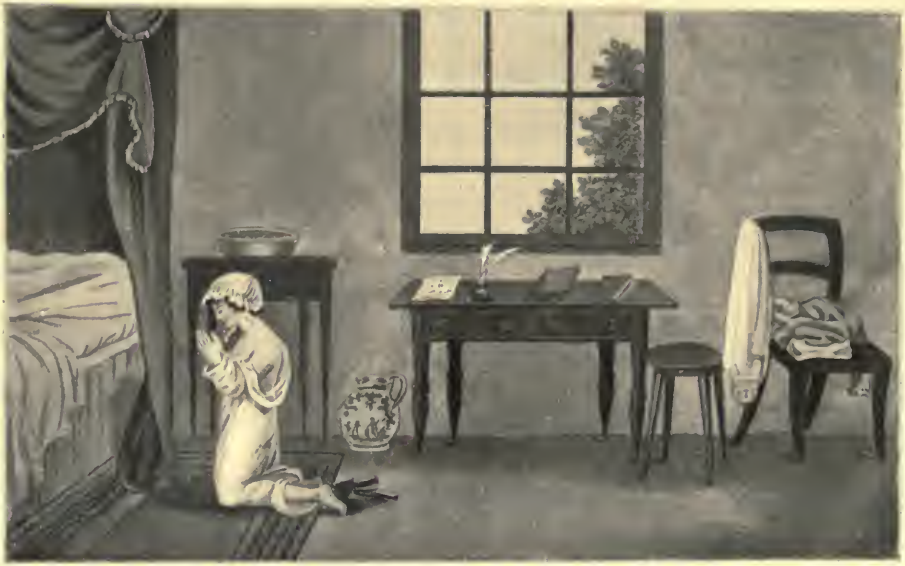
For one "of little or no literature" the Man of Ross did not do so badly.

As I walked up and down Ross's streets, I came to the conclusion that there is a vacancy for a new Man. The town could do with a thorough overhauling. Memorials to the honour of Kyrle are, as I have said, everywhere, but of the fire of his civic zeal there are no embers: Ross is dingy and decayed. The reward of the traveller comes, however, at the top of the hill, which is suddenly discovered to be a bluff above "pleased Vaga," and some miles of rich valley are at one's feet. But when Pope suggests that "rapid Severn's hoarse applause" can be heard here, he again goes too far. The rapid Severn is many miles away.

If, however, John Kyrle's name in Ross seems now to be honoured rather platonically or com-

mercially than in emulation, it is an active stimulus elsewhere. When, in 1876, the late Miranda Hill addressed a public letter to "Those who love Beautiful Things," and called upon her readers to help in getting more sweetness and light into the homes of the poor, and particularly the city-dwelling poor, the response took the form of a Society to which the name of John Kyrle was (at the suggestion of Mr. Benjamin Nattalie) given: the Kyrle Society. During its many years of activity, the Kyrle Society has done much to realize the idealism of its founders —for with Miranda Hill was associated her sister, the late Octavia Hill, that indomitable fighter for all that is good and ameliorative in life, whom, in her serene old age, a symphony in grey and silver, I used often to see walking on that height above Crockham Hill which her energies acquired for the nation as an open space for ever. In a speech which she made at one of the meetings of the Kyrle Society not long before her death, Octavia Hill thus summed up certain of the needs which the organization hoped and strove to supply. "Men, women, and children," she said, "want more than food, shelter, and warmth. They want, if their lives are to be full and good, space near their homes for exercise, quiet, good air, and sight of grass, trees, and flowers; they want colour,

which shall cheer them in the midst of smoke and fog; they want music, which shall contrast with the rattle of the motors and lift their hearts to praise and joy; they want suggestion of nobler and better things than those that surround them day by day. . . . I assure you that I believe these things have more influence on the spirit than we are at all accustomed to remember. They cultivate a sense of dignity and self-respect, as well as breaking the monotony of life." These things has the Kyrle Society dispensed and will continue to dispense, among its countless and noble activities. It is pleasant to think that that stolid old Man of Ross, in this new incarnation, has become so imaginatively sympathetic. How little can he ever have thought of this transmutation of his kindly busybodydom into something so fine and rare! But it was a true instinct which set his ancient name on the modern banner; and if ever a new motto is called for, the merits of "Od's bud, Od's bud, but I will mend you!" should be considered.



LAURA RISES FOR THE DAY

Plate 1

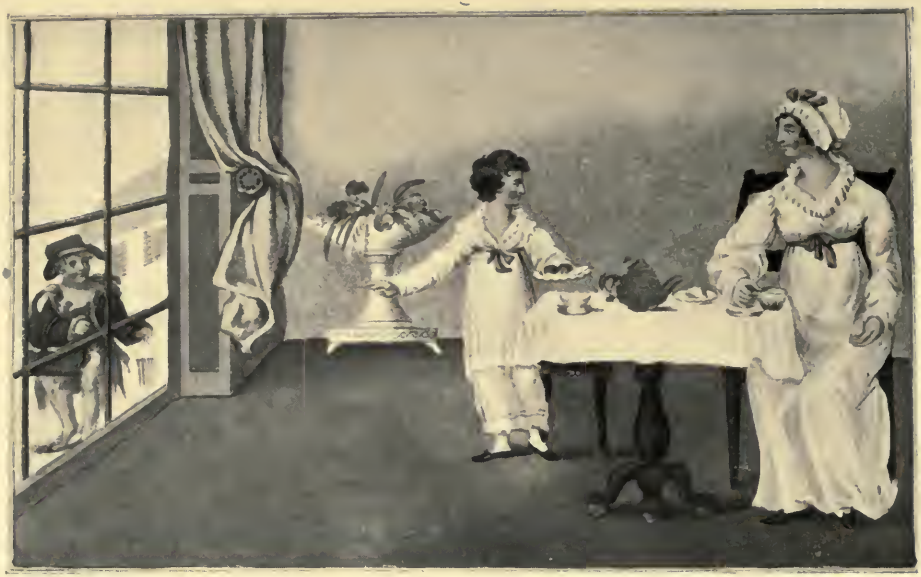
The Innocent's Progress

ONE thing leads to another, and had I not entered Mr. Simmonds' old curiosity shop in Monmouth to make inquiries about the Man of Ross's arm-chair, which nearly fills the window, I might never have met with *The Elegant Girl*, and *The Elegant Girl* is one of the comeliest books I ever coveted.

Having asked all my questions about the chair, which has much of the stern solidity of a fortress, I went upstairs and immediately was rejoiced by the sight of one of the engravings (Plate 2) which are reproduced hereabouts in this volume. It was one, said Mr. Simmonds, of a series, and he showed me eight others—nine in all—each with its moral verses underneath — and I was enchanted, so delicate is the colouring and so distinguished the design, so naïve the educational method and so easy the triumph. The reproductions here are absurdly small—the size of the originals is 9½ inches wide by 6 high—but though they give nothing of the tinting, they retain something of

the spirit, and the very striking composition is unimpaired by reduction.

Mr. Simmonds thought nine a complete set, but I felt that an even number was more probable, and in time, was proved to be right; but it was long before I could obtain sight of the other three and discover that they belonged to a book and had been taken from their binding to decorate a nursery's walls. There are excitements in this form of hunt—*la chasse au bouquin*—commensurate with those that accelerate the pulses of wearers of pink coats, and some were mine as the scent grew hot and hotter. My first coverts were the print shops, but they were blank; then I drew the famous Bloomsbury spinneys, both the Reading Room and the Print Room, but they were blank too; and then, tally ho! away to the South Kensington gorse. It was here I had the luck to ascertain—through a reference to Tuer's *Pages and Pictures*—that *The Elegant Girl* was a book; and forthwith I turned to my friends the booksellers, and in High Street, Marylebone, got directly on the trail, which took me to Hampstead, where a copy of the work (the only one of which I have yet heard) was run to earth. It is this copy that now lies before me—the property of Mr. C. T. Owen, a famous collector of what the Trade calls "juveniles," who has very kindly



LAURA COMBINES BREAKFAST AND PHILANTHROPY

Plate 3

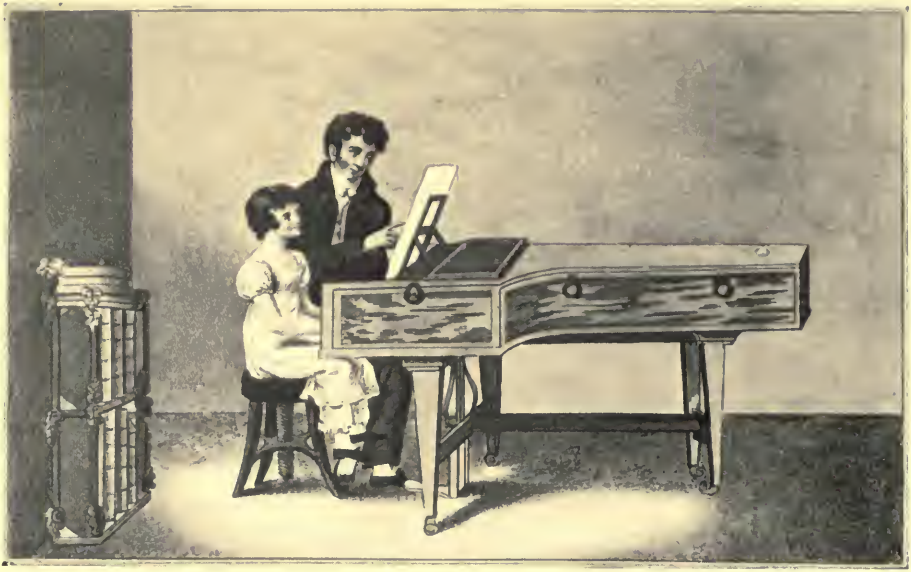
permitted the plates to be photographed for the present volume.

Mr. Simmonds thought the drawings the work of Adam Buck, an artist of child life who has lately been the mode; but London experts differ. No doubt (they say) Buck's influence is apparent, but no more. The only name is that of Alais, the engraver, on the title-page, and I do not find that Alais ever worked for Buck, but there are at South Kensington child scenes by Singleton engraved by him. *The Elegant Girl* may be Singleton's. Equally may the designs be by a foreigner, for there is a distinctly foreign suggestion here and there, notably in the furniture. The plates are not aquatints but were coloured by hand: the extreme scarcity of the volume probably being due to this circumstance, only a small edition having been prepared and that, I should imagine, at a high figure. To-day, of course, the value of the book is vastly higher.

All, or very nearly all, the old-fashioned writers for children had but one purpose animating their breasts; and that purpose was to make children better. I don't say that to-day we try to make them worse; but their naughtiness can amuse us, as apparently it never could our ancestors, and wild flowers can be preferred to the products of the formal parterre. Even Miss Edgeworth

came out nominally as "The Parents' Assistant," although her native kindliness and sense of narrative were too much for her; and even she thought of the child too much as plastic material. Children as children excited little interest; but a child as a progressive moral animal, susceptible of moulding, a potential adult and citizen, was worth making books for, if in return it played the game and improved its ways. There were of course a few books for the young which told an honest story—Charles and Mary Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* and *Mrs. Leicester's School* are early and shining examples—but the idea of amusement for amusement's sake was rare. And nonsense for the young, which later was to become a cult, did not exist before Edward Lear. Nothing can, of course, happen out of its time, and therefore the speculation is idle; but none the less it would be entertaining to visualize the effect of *Alice in Wonderland* on the little Fairchilds. What would Mr. Fairchild say to it? The work of a clergyman, too! Would not he return with renewed relish to the congenial task of repeating to his brood Biblical verses illustrating the wickedness of man's heart?

(Incidentally—but this is not the place, for *The Elegant Girl* is waiting—there are some interesting reflections to be recorded on the circumstance



LAURA'S MUSIC LESSON

Plate 4

that the entertainment of the young has never been in such willing and safe hands as those of the celibates. All the writers I have just glanced at (save Mrs. Sherwood) were unmarried. This need not be taken as any aspersion upon matrimony—there must be marriage and giving in marriage in order that little readers may exist—but it ought to be remembered whenever the single state is under criticism. Think of the injustice of the Bachelor Tax falling upon Lewis Carroll!)

The Elegant Girl, the date of which is 1813, sets out to improve too, for this is the title: *The Elegant Girl, or Virtuous Principles the True Source of Elegant Manners*; but its lessons are so unprejudiced and persuasive that no one can object. Moreover, a very exceptional artistic talent was employed: the best available rather than the cheapest. With such attractive jam, who could resent the pill? Alone, the pictures do very little in the didactic way, but to the detached artist came an ally in the shape of a gentle—and probably, I think, female—bard. Each of the twelve drawings has a six-lined stanza to drive home the picture and inculcate a maxim of sound and refined behaviour.

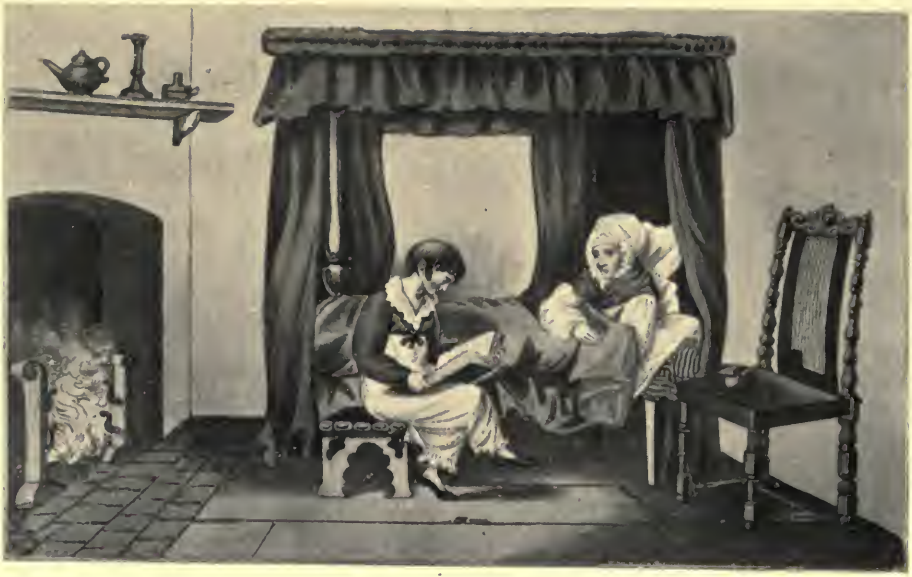
In the first plate Laura (the elegant girl is, of course, named Laura) is seen in her little bedroom at her morning prayers, and, thus fortified, she

then goes through the day in eleven episodes, all tending, as the Americans say, to uplift. Washed and dressed, she joins, in Plate No. 2, her mother at early lessons in a charming library such as neither Vermeer nor Whistler would have disdained. According to the verses, Laura is careless of "what becomes her best," but to the casual male eye she seems to have chosen her trousers with no little discretion. Having sufficiently "explored the arts and sciences," she is, in Plate No. 3, ready for breakfast, again with her mother. Her father was—where? Possibly he was dead; possibly (the date is 1813) at the wars; probably still in bed. At any rate his daughter passes her day of edification entirely without his assistance.

Breakfast affords the opportunity of a lesson in practical philanthropy, for chance sends a beggar to the window, and Laura craves, and is granted, permission to give him food and drink. In Plate No. 4 she has a music lesson—a lesson that "is not thrown away," for

> By Science taught with taste to play,
> She'll charm erewhile the listening throng
> And sing with modest grace her song.

In Plate No. 5, having slipped a red smock over her dress, but still retaining the captivating trousers, Laura practises painting. In No. 6,



LAURA VISITS THE SICK

Plate 11

substituting a purple smock for the red one, she teaches the little villagers their A.B.C.—a form of altruistic employment which those

> can best approve
> Who virtue and religion love.

In Plate No. 7, Laura, in yellow, acquires the rudiments of obedience and refrains from eating forbidden fruit. In Plate No. 8, in green, she carries food to an aged dame. In Plate No. 9, in blue, she brings a cup of broth to her mother, who, "languid and pale," reclines, like Madame Récamier, on an exceedingly uncomfortable couch. It is thus that Laura,

> in early days,
> Maternal tenderness repays.

The chief difficulty of any series of this kind is, artists tell me, to preserve the likenesses throughout. In the case of *The Elegant Girl* it has been fairly successfully overcome, but Laura, who at her orisons looks years older than when becomingly trousered, is never again so charming a child as in the library before breakfast; while, in the Plate which we have now reached, her mother's severe Greek profile, so noticeable at that frugal meal, has completely vanished. But, take it all round, the series is maintained with credibility and a sprightly realism.

In Plate No. 10 the mother is sufficiently recovered to play the harp while Laura bounds light on agile feet. In No. 11 Laura visits the impoverished sick, and, by reading the "sacred page,"

> Dries up the widow's scalding tears,
> Exalts her hopes and calms her fears.

And finally, in crimson, she is presented by her mother with the guerdon of her day's good conduct, which consists of several boxes of odds and ends labelled "Gifts for the Poor," including a large number of top hats—

> Gifts for the Poor her own Reward,
> For Laura felt and understood
> The Luxury of doing Good.

Such is the pretty, unobtrusive didactic scheme of *The Elegant Girl.* That it is now all out of date I am only too well aware; but it would do no great harm if a reprint of the book found its way into a few modern homes.

LAURA DANCES TO HER MOTHER'S MUSIC

Plate 10

The Visionary Triumph

"THIS," he said (we were discussing our favourite dreams), "is mine."

We prepared to listen.

"It is always," he went on, "the same—a cricket match: and the older I get and less able to play cricket, the oftener I have it. It is a real match, you must understand—first-class cricket, with thousands of spectators and excitement; and it is played a very long way from my home. That is an important point, as I will explain.

"I am merely one of the spectators. How long I have been watching I cannot say, but the match is nearing the end, and our side—the side which has my sympathies—is nearly all out, but still needs a few runs to win.

"What the side is I cannot clearly tell; all I know is that it is my own county, I mean the county from which I come—say Kent—and the match is at Old Trafford or Bramall Lane, against either Lancashire or Yorkshire. But the important thing is that my side is a man short.

This man either has been taken ill or has had to go away because of a bereavement. I am not clear as to that, but he is not there, anyway, and unless a substitute can be found Kent will be at a disadvantage and may lose."

We all got ready to speak.

"Oh, yes," he interpolated hurriedly, "I know, of course, that a substitute may not bat for another at the end of a match, but this is a dream, remember. That, perhaps, is what dreams are for—to provide the limited and frustrated life of the daytime with the compensation of limitless adventure and success."

"Order!" we cried.

"I beg pardon," he said, and returned to the vernacular.

"Very well; that is the situation. Meanwhile the last two batsmen are in—the Kent captain and another: that is to say, the last two, unless another is forthcoming. And still there are six runs needed—five to tie and six to win. The excitement is appalling. Every one in the vast concourse is tense. It is at this moment that the captain is bowled."

He stopped to wipe his forehead.

"What happens then?" he continued. "You would think the match was over. So it would be on any ordinary ground and under ordinary

conditions; but this is a dream. What happens therefore is that the Kent captain, instead of returning to the Pavilion, stops and talks to the other captain and then he leaves the pitch and begins to walk towards the ring. When he reaches the ring, some way from me, he begins to ask loudly, 'Is there a Kent man here who can play at all and would help us out?' I can hear him at first only faintly; then, as he gets closer, I can hear more clearly, 'Is there a Kent man here who can play at all and would help us out?' My heart beats faster and faster and I am nearly suffocated with suspense as he approaches, because I am a Kent man who can bat a bit, and to play for my county has always been my desire, and I am afraid that some one else will volunteer before the captain reaches me.

"You see now why the match has to be played so far away from home. If it were Kent *v.* Middlesex at Lord's, for example, there would be loads of Kentish men on the ground. But not so many up in the North.

"I always wonder why the captain does not begin in the Pavilion, but he does not. He comes straight to the ring. Every moment he is drawing nearer and no one has offered himself; and then at last he gets to me and I stand up and say that Kent is my county and I can play

a bit and would like to help. He hastens to accept my offer, and I take his bat and pads and gloves and go to the pitch, amid the cheers of the crowd.

"At the wicket I am received with hearty greetings by the rival captain (this is a dream, remember), and I take middle. Then I look round the field with perfect composure, as I have always seen the best batsmen do, and have always wanted to do myself. I am the coolest thing there.

"The situation is electrical. Six runs are needed and I am the last man. The bowler against me is a demon and I am dead out of practice and by no means fond of being hit on the body. He begins his run towards the wicket, and the ball leaves his terrible long swinging arm and comes towards me like a shell. I raise my bat, get it on the half-volley right in the middle, hit it clean over the Pavilion for six, and the match is won.

"That is my favourite dream."

"No wonder," we said.

Of Waiters and Managers

"WAITER!"

"Yessir."

Few words, I am told, resound so alluringly as these in the ears of Englishmen exiled in distant parts of the world. And I can believe it. More than half of the spell of London is contained in them.

Waiters interest me enormously. They are at once so able and so dense. They can have wonderful memories not only for our requirements but for faces, yet be without any imagination; certainly not the imagination that can put one in another's place, which, in real life, is the only variety of imagination that counts. Thus it happens that they can extend to a guest the warmest welcome — and never, except under compulsion, approach him again: never volunteer any solicitude whatever. Whether this is their own fault, or the fault of ourselves or our climate, I cannot say; but there is some evidence to think it is not unassociated with English influence,

because in their own countries their attentiveness is so much more constant. Take for example the wine waiter. In Paris this admirable functionary is by your side almost before you are seated, asking what he may bring; in London there is not a restaurant, however cosmopolitan, where he has not to be asked for, usually again and again. Why? Who shall say? Can it be that although these foreigners are ready to serve us and take our money, they are unfriendly at heart and have no reluctance to bring about our discomfort? Is that an impossible theory?

I suppose that an English waiter does now and then emigrate and carry on his old work; but he must be very rare. To spend our lives on alien soil in ministering to the hunger and thirst of foreigners is not an English custom; but how natural to foreigners it seems to be to feed us! What the number of foreigners settled in England in the catering industry is, I have no notion, except that it must be immense. You meet them everywhere; they are in London in battalions, and singly in the little watering-places. Swanage knows them, and Herne Bay. Strange destiny for a youth from, say, Bellinzona, where the train stops to take breath after the tortuous descent from the St. Gothard, to wear

evening dress all day long in a hotel in Llandudno carrying chops! I always ask these foreign boys where they come from and get such unsettling replies; unsettling because they conjure up visions of other lands.

As to nostalgia, I wonder what proportion of the waiters who come to us return home. Some, of course, do so as quickly as possible, for they are here purely for language and experience, and must hasten back to assist their hotel-owning fathers at Zermatt, Lucerne, and elsewhere. The aristocrats of the calling, these—often the millionaires, although we, offering them shillings and sixpences and ordering them about, little dream it. Of the humbler others, all when they first arrive here probably intend to go back; but so many seem to remain. There are foreign waiters who have been in London, to my knowledge, for a quarter of a century. That they never contemplated such an exile, I am certain; but they are Londoners now: in London their poor feet have grown flat, and in London they will die. Usually having English wives and English children, they are English in everything but syntax. All these old foreigners are either Italian or Swiss. French waiters in London one seldom or never meets. Considering that the French waiter in England has long been a

familiar figure on the stage, this is odd. But emigration is not a French foible.

Of no class of public servants does one know so little as of waiters. How do they spend what little spare time is theirs? What are their tastes, their hobbies? Where do they keep their non-official clothes, at home or at the restaurant? When do they have their own meals? And have they good appetites? What, would you say, is the first English word that they acquire? I have my own view, but what, I wonder, is yours. Mine is that their first English word is also their last—"nice." What do they think of us? What do they who serve think of us who eat and pay? Do they despise us more when the tip is too small or when it is too large? I have long held the belief that the right time to tip a waiter is not at the end of a meal but at the beginning. If I seldom put the plan into practice, it is because I have such fear that the result might be no better.

Was every restaurant manager once a waiter? Every head waiter was once an under waiter, of course: that is beyond question. But does one see the ex-waiter in the manager? Not so clearly, and often not at all. How then do managers grow? Of course I know that nothing is more easy than to control. I know that if the private

ambition of any large number of persons was to be asked, it would be found that the majority want to manage, and that each is convinced that he has special qualifications to manage well, in fact better than anyone else; while none of us is so blind as to fail to discern weak spots in the management of others. Indeed, pointing out how offices and shops and other establishments—even private houses—would be far nearer perfection if we ourselves were responsible for them is one of the staples of conversation. "If only I had the running of this show for a few days!" we say, casting dark glances of unutterable efficiency. But the chances are we should do no better: at any rate not for long. With no class of workmen, I suspect, has the new broom a shorter period of zeal than among managers; for there is no such disheartening task as endeavouring to get good work out of others.

All managers, by reason of their power and isolation, are a little to be feared, but to me the entertainment manager is the most terrifying, so complete is the difference between his sunshine and his storm. With their friends, the men whose right and privilege it is to lubricate the passages behind the shirt-front, they are of geniality the soul; but the smiling face freezes to stone with appalling suddenness should the

necessity arise for ejecting a turbulent or over-lubricated member of the audience. For the manager rules. And his authority is the more to be respected because it is supported by powerful men in uniform, often actual giants, who only await the word of command to stand no nonsense whatever.

The managers of entertainments can be swifter in their methods than the managers of hotels and restaurants, because they have less to lose. I do not suggest that they lack courtesy; but the risks of giving offence are less serious. A man ejected from a music-hall goes there again if the programme attracts him; but a man ejected from a hotel stays away. Nor is he ejected lightly; because on general principles hotels and restaurants like to make friends and keep them. There are in those establishments all kinds of tendrils that the theatre and music-hall know nothing of. Hence for suavity and sweet reasonableness (up to a point) the hotel manager is notable. Behind the silk lapels of his frock-coat is a reservoir of patience; beneath that glossy and perfectly coiffured hair is a profound understanding of guests' whimsies. But here too the manager rules, and when the time for action arrives, how visible and tangible is the iron.

Tact and compromise are only their public

weapons. The things that they say when they are again back in their offices must be blood-curdling! for reaction from deference under protest both demands and deserves strength of language; and their way with defaulters must be terrible and swift.

Entertainment and luxury managers cannot, I suspect, be anything but cynical. We others make them so. What kind of opinion short of admiration can theatrical managers have of the crowd that makes up a queue on the pavement for hours on a wet night? Or indeed on a night that is not wet? Knowing the theatre from within, being familiar with all its tinsel, what can their feelings be, apart from financial satisfaction, as they watch the eager faces crowding in? Possibly the theatre manager's ideal is to spend his evenings at home, reading, playing Patience, possessing his soul; and he is doomed to be here, among these gaping gad-abouts! And the restaurant manager—possibly his ideal is to be at home too, eating food at its proper value. How then can he view this mob devouring at famine prices, and retain his reverence?

Managers may not have a trade union (or perhaps they have), but they certainly have an understanding among themselves. Even when

rivals they are friends. There is a federation of the frock-coat and the expansive shirt-front, and fortunate the outsider who is permitted within this magic circle! For to know managers intimately is not least of the arts of life.

A Coward's Courage

THE War brought bad days to all head waiters, but not least to those in English provincial hotels, native born and not too efficient. It deplenished or wholly removed their staffs; but the head waiters had to remain—to struggle with inexperienced hands, to see the fair fame of the establishment disappearing, to receive and, if possible, parry the complaints of the customers.

Under these afflictions some suggested absolute hopelessness; some showed signs of wear and tear; some cultivated that apathy under misfortune, that dulled acceptance of bad luck, which is part of the Briton's heritage from his climate, others deprecated the situation but smiled, and in smiling disarmed criticism.

I am thinking in particular of one who more than smiled and disarmed criticism—who laughed and conquered.

I found him in the coffee-room of an ancient and honourable West Country hotel. Little

tables and big were all about him, with pink and green wine-glasses on them and napkins bursting from tumblers into symmetrical schemes of foliage. It was just before lunch and he was adding finishing touches of polish to knives and forks, with an apron protecting his very spick dress-suit: dinner jacket with satin roll collar and neat black tie; such clothes as, but for the time of day, would proclaim him fellow-guest rather than servitor. A big man, with a large white and superficially very amiable face. But his most notable feature was his eye. It was the eye of a child—a rather spoilt child, accustomed to get its own way and to be considered preferentially; but it was confident and dominating too. It called, in association with the vast benignant countenance, for a similar mood in its *vis-à-vis*—insisted on it, had the right to it; so that one would endure much rather than be the cause of disappointment.

I was in the coffee-room merely to arrange about lunch, but the head waiter's communicativeness was such that while doing so I learned many things. I learned that he was practically single-handed; that he had been there for twenty and more years—twenty-three come December; that the War was hitting the place very hard; that it was one's duty not to grumble; that all

his best boys had been called up; that three of them had been wounded and one killed; that waitresses do their best but are not so good as waiters, at any rate not from his point of view; that the high wages at the local munition works made it difficult to retain waitresses anyway; and that spirits really were now hardly worth drinking.

At lunch there were many people, but, with very little help, the head waiter, now divested of his apron, kept them fairly contented, even finding time to talk a little at most of the tables. From certain broken sentences that reached my ears I gathered that he was practically single-handed; that something was hitting the place very hard; that some one had been somewhere for more than twenty years; that grumbling was a mistake; and that spirits nowadays were hardly worth drinking. Probably, had not a guide-book claimed my attention, I should have heard and learned more.

As the room began to empty and the strain of attendance was relaxed, he advanced smilingly upon my table, with an expression of supreme satisfaction, bearing before him, in both hands, a brass-bound box or casket.

"You might like to see," he said, "a little souvenir which one of my staff, back on leave

from the Front, brought me;" and with enormous pride and a gratification almost paternal—or more than paternal, Creatorial—he opened the lid and revealed a model aeroplane constructed of metal from shell-cases and other accessories of warfare.

"I've always," he said, "had good boys and treated them well, and the first thing this lad did was to come and bring this souvenir he'd been making for me. He's back in France now."

I was properly appreciative, both of the workmanship of the model and of the kindly relations subsisting between superior and inferior, and he bore the relic away with complacency radiating from his capacious person, and I saw him, not without surprise and a slight twinge of regret, displaying it at another table. Why, I cannot exactly explain, but it seemed to me wanting in finer feeling, in the subtlest delicacy, to show to every one at the same time this proof of devotion to himself. There should be intervals. It wasn't that I was mortified not to be unique; but to make a triumphal progress with the thing seemed a little blatant.

You may until now have been looking upon this document as just a character sketch of a certain head waiter. But really it is something else; it is the story of my own courage. For it was my

destiny that day to have to act with a distasteful bravery. At dinner that evening, when the strain of attendance had begun to relax and several of the guests had departed, I was conscious of the head waiter's eye turned towards me with a gleam of assurance and his features melting comfortably into the smile of self-approval. But a moment later my blood was frozen and an icy perspiration broke out over me as I saw him, all confidence and complacency, bearing in my direction the box containing the aeroplane. For quicker than lightning the dreadful thought had flashed through my brain: "He has forgotten that he showed it me at lunch," followed by the agonized question: "What shall I do? Am I strong enough to tell him so? Can I bring myself to do something which must abash him?"

By this time he was on me, wreathed in happiness and expectancy. "You might like to see," he began, "a little souvenir which one of my staff——"

With a desperate effort I pulled myself together. "Oh, that little model," I said. "You showed me that at lunch;" and I lowered my eyes in the hope that it might make his discomfiture easier.

He laughed. "So I did," he said, and carried

it to the next table. The next: not even the next but one! "You might——" I heard him begin.

When shall we learn, some of us who have so much sensitiveness for the insensitive, that there is nothing they need less?

Third Thoughts

THIS story was told to me by a friend.

It is my destiny (said he) to buy in the dearest markets and to sell—if I succeed in selling at all—in the cheapest. Usually, indeed, having tired of a picture or decorative article, I have positively to give it away; almost to make its acceptance by another a personal favour to me. But the other day was marked by an exception to this rule so striking that I have been wondering if perhaps the luck has not changed and I am, after all, destined to be that most enviable thing, a successful dealer.

It happened thus. In drifting about the old curiosity shops of a cathedral city I came upon a portfolio of water-colour drawings, among which was one that to my eye would have been a possible Turner, even if an earlier owner had not shared that opinion or hope and set the magic name with all its initials (so often placed in the wrong order) beneath it.

"How much is this?" I asked scornfully.

"Well," said the dealer, "if it were a genuine Turner it would be worth anything. But let's say ten shillings. You can have it for that; but I don't mind if you don't, because I'm going to London next week and should take it with me to get an opinion."

I pondered.

"Mind you, I don't guarantee it," he added.

I gave him the ten shillings.

By what incredible means I found a purchaser for the drawing at fifty pounds there is no need to tell, for the point of this narrative resides not in bargaining with collectors, but in bargaining with my own soul. The astonishing fact remains that I achieved a profit of forty-nine pounds ten and was duly elated. I then began to think.

The dealer (so my thoughts ran) in that little street by the cathedral west door, he ought to participate in this. He behaved very well to me and I ought to behave well to him. It would be only fair to give him half.

Thereupon I sat down and wrote a little note saying that the potential Turner drawing, which no doubt he recollected, had turned out to be authentic, and I had great pleasure in enclosing him half of the proceeds, as I considered that the only just and decent course.

Having no stamps and the hour being late I did not post this, and went to bed.

At about 3.30 a.m. I woke widely up and, according to custom, began to review my life's errors, which are in no danger of ever suffering from loneliness. From these I reached, by way of mitigation, my recent successful piece of chaffering, and put the letter to the dealer under both examination and cross-examination. Why (so my thoughts ran) give him half? Why be Quixotic? This is no world for Quixotry. It was my eye that detected the probability of the drawing, not his. He had indeed failed; did not know his own business. Why put a premium on ineptitude? No, a present of, say, ten pounds at the most would more than adequately meet the case.

Sleep still refusing to oblige me, I took a book of short stories and read one. Then I closed my eyes again, and again began to think about the dealer. Why (so my thoughts ran) send him ten pounds? It will only give him a wrong idea of his customers, none other of whom would be so fair, so sporting, as I. He will expect similar letters every day and be disappointed, and then he will become embittered and go down the vale of tears a miserable creature. He looked a nice old man too; a pity, nay a crime, to injure such

a nature. No, ten pounds is absurd. Five would be plenty. Ten would put him above himself.

While I was dressing the next morning I thought about the dealer again. Why should I (so my thoughts ran), directly I had for the first time in my life brought off a financial *coup*, spoil it by giving a large part of the profit away? Was not that flying in the face of the Goddess of Business, whoever she may be? Was it not asking her to disregard me—only a day or so after we had at last got on terms? There is no fury like a woman scorned; it would probably be the end of me. City magnates are successful probably just because they don't do these foolish impulsive things. Impulse is the negation of magnatism. If I am to make any kind of figure in this new *rôle* of fine-art-speculator (so my thoughts continued) I must control my feelings. No, five pounds is absurd. A *douceur* of one pound will meet the case. It will be nothing to me—or, at any rate, nothing serious—but a gift of quail and manna from a clear sky to the dealer, without, however, doing him any harm. A pound will be ample, accompanied by a brief note.

The note was to the effect that I had sold the drawing at a profit which enabled me to make him a present, because it was an old, and perhaps

odd, belief of mine that one should do this kind of thing; good luck should be shared.

I had the envelope in my pocket containing the note and the cheque when I reached the club for lunch; and that afternoon I played bridge so disastrously that I was glad I had not posted it.

After all (so my thoughts ran, as I destroyed the envelope and contents) such bargains are all part of the game. Buying and selling are a perfectly straightforward matter between dealer and customer. The dealer asks as much as he thinks he can extort, and the customer, having paid it, is under no obligation whatever to the dealer. The incident is closed.

Enthusiasts

IN turning over the pages of *Wisden's Cricketers' Almanack*, best of year-books, for 1919, I came upon the obituary notice of a monarch new to me, who died in April of the preceding year at the age of six-and-forty: George Tubow the Second, who reigned over Tonga and was the last of the independent kings of the Pacific. As to the qualities of head and heart displayed by the deceased ruler, *Wisden* is silent; to inquire into such matters is not that annalist's province. George Tubow the Second won his place in *Wisden's* pages because he was a cricket enthusiast and the head of a nation of cricket enthusiasts. "His subjects became so devoted to the game that it was necessary to prohibit it on six days of the week in order to avert famine, the plantations being entirely neglected for the cricket-field."

It is perhaps chiefly among the players of games that the wildest enthusiasts are found, and particularly of cricket. Golf can afflict its

victims seriously enough, but I doubt if it ever exercises cricket's dominating spell. I have never heard of a golfer sleeping with his clubs; but there was a boy at school who carried his bat about with him all day, and then took it to bed with him. And it is not only the players of the game, but the watchers, the students, too. There were other quite small boys at this school (I was among them) who knew every detail of county cricket, could pick All-England elevens, and were acquainted with the initials of every amateur. (Those were the days before professionals had any initials, unless they chanced to be brothers.) The newspapers existed for us only in summer, and existed then only because they reported cricket matches. Wars, earthquakes, rebellions, assassinations, were mere padding. Some of us have perhaps grown out of this frenzy; others retain it and still turn first to the cricket reports, and think of Lord's as a more desirable place than St. Stephen's, or the Oval than the bosom of our families. For cricket relaxes her grip very reluctantly.

Politics can utterly mould a man's mind and actions into a state for which enthusiasm is the kindest word. I do not mean statecraft or legislation—those functions are usually carried out by any but enthusiasts—but politics as party

conflict and the rivalry of personality, politics as bound up with public meetings and speeches. A near relation of my own sank much of his native capacity in the pursuit of this excitement. That he should be interested in the progress of an election in his own borough was natural enough; but he went far beyond that. He would travel any distance to be present at a by-election at a place with which he had not the remotest connection—his joy being to make one of the audience who in the natural course of events would hiss and groan at the name of Salisbury and exult and wave and cheer at the name of Gladstone. Gladstone he had never met, nor had he read him; but he admired his features and his collars and believed that he could do no wrong; and it was meat and drink—more, *foie gras* and Clicquot—to be with those who also were true believers and hear him extolled. Portraits of the G.O.M. were all over the house; while anyone who exaggerated or made any kind of questionable remark or terminological inexactitude was said to have told a "Salisbury."

The one-idea'd enthusiast as he gets older can be rather a pathetic sight. I remember, in 1889, being taken, at Godstone, to an inn to see the landlord, a "character," whose principal claims

to distinction were an ill-controlled temper and an unbroken record of over fifty visits to the Derby. He was inflamed and infirm, and a very truculent fellow; but he had his adherents, who hung upon his reminiscences of the race (which, the older you become, the more often was run in a snowstorm); and his one hold on life was the belligerent, passionate purpose of seeing it again. This (with a series of bloodshot imprecations) he vowed to me he should do, for many years to come; and, for all I know, he did. But to this day I think of him with a kind of shudder, so malignantly self-centred was he and so ferocious in his Epsom mania. Indeed, even without ebullitions of temper and arrogance, men whose pride it is never to have missed annual events or any customary proceeding can be not only pathetic, but extremely boring. Those enthusiasts for discomfort who break the ice in the Serpentine rather than break their morning-swim routine—I have never met one of them, but I am sure I should find him tiresome.

Among collectors extreme enthusiasts are numerous. The courts not long since were occupied with the case of a gentleman of leisure who had fallen into the moneylenders' hands very heavily through a passion for adding dead butterfly to dead butterfly; while every one

knows the story of one of the Rothschilds fitting out an Arctic expedition in the hope that it would bring back, alive, even a single specimen of a certain boreal flea. All other fleas he possessed, but this was lacking. On making inquiries among friends I find that the classic example of enthusiasm is, however, not a cricketer nor a collector, but the actor who, when cast for Othello, blacked himself all over. Every one, of course, has heard the story, but its origin may not be generally known, and I am wondering if it occurred anywhere in print before Mr. Crummles confided it to Nicholas Nickleby. Was it a commonplace of the green-room or did Dickens (who was capable of doing so) invent it? Joseph Knight being no more, to lighten the small hours with gossip and erudition, who shall tell?

Meanwhile I am reminded of an incident in modern stage history which supplies a pendant to the great Othello feat. It occurred in the days when the gramophone was in its infancy and the late Herbert Campbell was approaching his end. That massive comedian, who was then engaged in his annual task of personating a dame or a queen, or whatever was monumentally feminine, in the Drury Lane pantomime—as a matter of fact, he was at the moment a dame—had been invited by one of the gramophone

companies to visit their office in the City and make a record of one or more of his songs and one or more of his dialogues with the other funny man, whoever that might be. The name escapes me; all that I feel certain of is that it was long after the golden age when Herbert Campbell served as a foil to the irresponsible vivacity of Dan Leno—who in association with him was like quicksilver running over the surface and about the crevices of a rock—and still longer after those regular Christmas partnerships with Harry Nicholls which were liberal educations in worldly sagacity tempered by nonsense. The name of the other actor is, however, unimportant, for Herbert Campbell is the hero of this tale, and it was for Herbert Campbell's songs and patter that the operator was waiting and the waxen discs had been prepared and the orchestra was in attendance and the manager had taken his cheque book from his desk—for "money down" is the honourable rule of the gramophone industry. The occasion was furthermore exceptional because it was the first time that this popular performer had been "recorded." Hitherto he had refused all Edisonian blandishments, but to-day he was to come into line with the other favourites.

And yet he did not come. Normally a punctual man, he was late. Everything was

ready—more than ready—and there was no dame.

Suddenly above the ground swell of the traffic was heard, amid the strenuousness of the City Road, the unaccustomed sound of cheers and laughter. "Hurray! Hurray!" floated up to the recording-room from the distant street below, and every head was stretched out to see what untoward thing could be happening. "Hurray! Hurray!" and more laughter. And then was discerned an immense crowd, chiefly errand-boys, surrounding a four-wheeler, from which with the greatest difficulty an old lady of immense proportions, dressed, or rather upholstered, in the gaily-coloured clothes of the century before last, was endeavouring to alight, backwards. "Hurray! Hurray!" cried the boys at every new struggle. At last the emergence was complete, when the old lady, standing upright and shaking down her garments, revealed herself as no other than Herbert Campbell, the idol of "The Lane," who in order to speak a few words into the funnel of a phonograph had thought it needful to put on every detail of his costume and to make up that acreage of honest, genial physiognomy.

Saturday Afternoons

I. Royal Windsor

LAST Saturday, when the sky was of dazzling brilliance and a wind of devilish malignancy blew from the Arctic regions, I went to Windsor, in order to compare the castle as it is with the castle as Turner saw it in one of the pictures at Agnews', and to see if it is true, as a landscape expert assures me, that the heightening of the towers has ruined it. Studying the castle from various points of view, I was consistently impressed by its adequacy, its mediæval dominance, and its satisfying solidity.

Spring being so bitterly cold, I left the streets, where there is no central heating, and where I could catch no glimpse of anyone in the least like Mistress Anne Page, and took refuge first in St. George's Chapel and then in the State Apartments. The chapel as a whole grows in beauty, even though new monuments interrupt its lines. The light of Saturday, coming from a sky scoured by the northern breeze, was of the

most lucid, so that every detail of the lovely ceiling was unusually visible, while even in the sombre choir, with its dark stalls and hanging banners and memorials of the Knights of the Garter, one could see almost distinctly. It is interesting to have as near London as this a sacred building so like those which we normally do not enter until we have crossed the Channel.

I was alone in the chapel, but in the State Apartments made one of a party of thirty to forty, chiefly soldiers, led round by a guide. Anything less like Harrison Ainsworth than this guide I cannot imagine; or, indeed, the inside of any castle less like the fateful and romantic fortress of that storyteller's dream. Henry VIII.'s suit of armour we certainly saw, but the guide's hero is a later king, George IV., who subjected every room to his altering hand. Of Herne the Hunter there was not a sign. The most sinister thing there was the bed in the Council Chamber where visiting monarchs (referred to by the guide as "The Royals") sleep, one of whom not so very long ago was the Kaiser. "I wish he was in it now," a bloodthirsty Canadian soldier muttered darkly in my ear.

The King's furniture struck me as too ornate, but he has some wonderful pictures. The guide

seemed to dwell with most affection upon a landscape by Benjamin West, but I remember with more vividness and pleasure a series of portraits of Henrietta, queen of Charles I., by Van Dyck: one by the door, and two others flanking the fireplace of the superb Van Dyck room. There is also a Rubens room containing, among many more pretentious things, a fascinating portrait of the painter's second wife and a family group devised on what was, to me, a new principle. The parents are here seen in the company of their ten children; but, if the guide is to be believed, on the original canvas only the parents and a small proportion of this brood were depicted, space being left for the insertion of the others as year by year they made their appearance. The scheme offers problems. Since the eldest child looks ten or eleven and the youngest is a baby, we must suppose (always if the guide is not misinformed) that the painter added ageing touches to the whole group at each new sitting.

When one hunts in packs there is little opportunity to examine crowded walls, and there were many pictures of which I should like to see more at leisure. Among them was a Rembrandt, a Correggio, a Titian, a Honthorst, and two Canalettos. There are the punctual carvings by Grinling Gibbons in Charles II.'s dining-room and

elsewhere. Other outstanding articles are the jewelled throne once belonging to the King of Candy; the armour of the King's Champion, that obsolete but picturesque functionary; and the portraits of all the winners of Waterloo, at home and in the field, except any private soldiers.

On leaving the castle I walked an incredible number of miles down an impeccably straight road to the equestrian statue that stands out so bravely against the sky on the hill that closes the vista: Snow Hill. The statue is of George III., and it is a fine bold thing. Not in the same class with Verrocchio's bronze horseman in Venice, or Donatello's bronze horseman in Padua, but impressive by its bigness and superior to either of those masterpieces in its site. And then I found a really good confectioner's, whose first two initials correspond startlingly to my own, and, in the company of frozen Etonians not less greedy than I, ate little pots of jam until it was time to catch the train.

II. Kew in April, 1919

Kew in the old days used to be largely a German paradise, for the Teutons in our midst found the gardens more like their own pleasaunces, although wanting in beer, than any other London resort. But on Saturday I heard no German tones. A

few French voices mingled with the thrushes and blackbirds; and a number of American soldiers, not unaccompanied by British beauty, sat on secluded seats. The rest of us were natives, promenading with true national decorum, carefully obeying all the laws concerning birds'-nesting, throwing paper about, smoking, and (in the glass-houses) keeping to the right, without the observance of which scientific botany cannot prosper. And for some reason or other (connected no doubt with the universal advance in the cost of life which has been agreed upon as salutary) we were all forced to pay a penny for admission.

It annoys me to think that not until the Germans vacated the gardens was this entrance fee charged. To them (as to us for generations) Kew was free; now that they have disappeared, one of the results of their provocative belligerence is that it is free no longer!

Although early yet both for flower and leaf, the daffodils are already millions strong, and will be stronger, and in the rock garden the saxifrage's tender mauve clusters are seen, and there is a patch of the lovely *Antennaria Plantagenia* at its best. But the most beautiful object at the moment—and that which I went especially to see—is the Yulan, the Chinese magnolia, *Mag-*

nolia conspicua, in nearly full bloom. Imagine a great tree with black boughs and twigs exquisitely disposed, from which burst ten thousand lilies of a dazzling purity. No buds, no leaves; nothing but these myriad serene white flowers springing from the hard wood. The position of the tree adds to the strangeness and beauty of it, for it is remote from anything formal, between the biggest glass-house and the edge of the arboretum. On Saturday, seen against an indigo thunderbank, it was unearthly in its luminosity.

I have to thank the rain for driving me into the Royal Palace, which, though I have known Kew for so many years, I had never entered before. In this pleasant mansion, red brick without and white panelling within, and smaller than would satisfy the requirements of any war profiteer to-day, poor old George III. passed part of the clouded evening of his long reign. The rooms retain certain of their pictures—chiefly Dutch floral and bird subjects, very gloomy and congested, and a large portrait of "Farmer George," done by the famous Miss Linwood in woolwork —and there are a few pieces of dreadful ancient furniture in one of the Queen's apartments; but otherwise they are empty.

In spite of the associations of the palace—the deranged old monarch and his stuffy Charlotte

of Mecklenburg-Strelitz (recollections of Fanny Burney's *Diary* and of Peter Pindar's *Lousiad* kept chasing each other through my mind), the general feeling in it is one of cheerfulness, the result, I fancy, as much of the proportions and whiteness of the rooms as of its situation in this green sanctuary.

III. South Kensington

London's museums and galleries are so constantly receiving new gifts that the good Londoner (such as I should like to become) ought to be as punctual in his visits to them as he is to the barber's. In fact, if we made it a rule to revisit a museum as often as we have our hair cut, we should all be the better: all of us, that is, except the Prime Minister and Mr. Asquith, and a few others who like their locks too long.

Dropping into the Victoria and Albert Museum last week, I was delighted to find a new acquisition in the form of three or four cases of early Korean pottery which Mr. Aubrey Le Blond has made over to the nation. The taste for early Korean pottery may not be every one's at first, but it will grow, and already it is mine.

The lovely things have no positive colouring: all pearl greys and whites and quiet shades of brown, and all producing an effect that is exceedingly restful. The eye is never startled, as

it can be by Chinese and Japanese daring, or by Persian splendour; it is gently soothed. Some of the pottery is plain or self-coloured, but most has decoration, always of the most frugal, and always exquisite in its delicacy. In the matter of shape, some of these vessels are so beautiful as to catch one's breathing; and all so easy and natural, so sensitive and reposeful: nothing fantastic, nothing forced, nothing "clever" or elaborate.

Most of the collection belongs to the period 924–1392. All the while that we in England were under Saxon rule and Norman rule and Plantagenet rule — getting ourselves a little straight at Runnymede and waging war in Scotland and France—the placid Korean potters were busy at their wheels turning out these bowls and vases; and the reason of their perfection at this day, so long after, when they have fulfilled the odd destiny of becoming a show for Londoners, is that, as receptacles for food and drink, they were buried by pious relatives with their dead, in order that in whatever next world those dead reawakened they might not be without a bite and sup.

IV. The Painted Hall

After being shut for some years—to protect it, long before the War, from certain dis-

satisfied ladies who in the dim and distant past took it out of pictures if they did not get the vote—the Painted Hall at Greenwich is again open (1919), not I hope to close its doors to the public any more. All people interested in our naval history and the men who made it must acquire the Greenwich habit (although whitebait and turtle soup are no longer available to sustain them at the adjacent "Ship"), but in particular should the Nelson devotees be happy, for the Painted Hall is rich in portraits of him, portraits of his friends, pictures of scenes in his life, pictures of his death, and personal relics. Indeed this Hall is to Nelson what the Invalides is to Napoleon. Sir John Thornhill (with whose daughter Hogarth ran away) may have covered its walls and its ceiling with Stuarts and allegory —at three pounds the square yard for the ceiling work and one pound for the walls—but it is not of Stuarts and allegory that one thinks, it is of the most fascinating and romantic and sympathetic of British heroes and (of course, after Lord Fisher), the greatest of our admirals.

Nelson is brought very near us. Among the personal relics are the very clothes he was wearing when he died on the *Victory*, the codicil to his will, written in his big left-hand characters and witnessed by the friend, Captain Hardy, in whose

arms he sank. On a neighbouring wall is Turner's great lurid painting of the *Victory* in action, while elsewhere in the Museum will be found a model of the whole battle, with the *Victory* closely engaged with the *Redoubtable,* from whose mizzen-top the fatal bullet is supposed to have been fired.

There are many other intimate souvenirs; and once there were more, but thieves intervened. From those stolen in a burglary many years ago (the windows have since had bars put to them) the only one to be regained was Nelson's gold watch; and this was found—where do you think? Hidden in a concertina somewhere in Australia. But after those wanderings and vicissitudes it now reposes again in safety in the Painted Hall, for all hero-worshippers to covet.

Complete as the Nelson collection appears to be, one realizes, on reflection, that only as a sailor is he celebrated here. We see him in every aspect of his fighting career; we see his friends, sturdy old William Locker, who was a governor of this Hospital, and so forth; we see his admirals and captains. But of Emma Hamilton no trace!

The Painted Hall, from Wren's design, was built by William and Mary. The Museum fills several rooms in an adjacent building which was

to have been a riverside palace for Charles II. It is notable chiefly for its relics of the other hero of Greenwich Hospital, Sir John Franklin. It is also rich in models of ships, but of models of ships I personally can very quickly have a surfeit; rather would I sit (as I did on Saturday afternoon) beside the Thames and watch the real vessels go by—the big tramp steamers homing laden from abroad or leaving in ballast for the open sea; the little busy tugs, with their retinue of lighters; and the brown-sailed barges moving swiftly with the stream. There was a merry breeze under a cloudless sky, and the air was filled with the music of the Greenwich symphony, which is played by an orchestra entirely composed of foghorns and hooters.

But Greenwich is amphibious. The river may not be for all tastes; there is the park too, with its avenues climbing to the heights of Blackheath. The deer have gone; but the Observatory remains, for the accurate adjustment of watches, and there is the distant prospect of London, of which the great landscape painters used to be so fond, from the corner of the terrace. It is much the same as when Turner and others limned it, save that to-day the dome of St. Paul's seems to rise from the very middle of the Tower Bridge.

V. Sir John Soane's Museum

No sooner was Sir John Soane's Museum in Lincoln's Inn Fields open again, after its long closure, than I hastened there to renew acquaintance with that remarkable, if not incredible, pictorial document, Hogarth's "Election" series. Our own elections are frequent enough to add piquancy to the comparison, but apart from that it is instructive to see in what spirit our not very remote ancestors approached the ordeal of being returned to Parliament. The world may not have advanced very perceptibly in many directions, but, if Hogarth is trustworthy, only a master of paradox could successfully maintain that no progress is to be noted in the manufacture of legislators.

Not, however, that everything here depicted is obsolete. Far from it. The groundwork is the same, and probably will always be so, but there is now less coarseness. There is also more order, more method. And one has, furthermore, to remember that Hogarth was a synthetic satirist, and a rather wicked wit to boot. He assembled his puppets rather than found them all together, and it amused him to heighten effects and to score off his pet butts when he could. All these allowances, however, being made, I fancy that the "Election" series has a good deal of old England in it.

The series begins with the entertainment given by the two candidates of the Court Party to their supporters, and even among Hogarth's works this scene is remarkable for the number of things that are occurring at once. No one excelled our English master in this crowding of incident, not even Breughel or Teniers. While one of the candidates is, doubtless for strictly political reasons, permitting himself to be caressed by an old woman, a small girl abstracts one of his rings, and a man singes his wig with a clay pipe. In the street outside the room is a procession of the rival party, throwing through the window half-bricks one of which is seen to have just smashed a gentleman's head, while another gentleman, injured at a slightly more remote period of the campaign, is being anointed with spirits without, while he consumes spirits within. At the end of the table the mayor of the independent borough, having been reduced by too many oysters and too much liquor to a state of collapse, is being bled by a surgeon. An orchestra, including a left-handed fiddleress and the bagpipes, plays throughout; and a small boy, in spite of the mayor's condition, continues to mix punch in a mash tub. All this at once!

That was overnight. The next day the canvassing begins, and it is superfluous to state that

bribery and corruption are rife. Here, again, is a wealth of synchronous occurrence. On the left are seen two gay ladies persuading one of the candidates to buy trinkets for them from a pedlar. That could hardly be done to-day, at any rate so openly; but another of the incidents is of all time: a conversation between two men, a barber and a cobbler, in which the barber explains how a certain naval engagement was won, symbolizing the ships by pieces of a broken clay pipe, very much as tap-room tacticians somewhere this very evening will be reconstructing the battle of Jutland or the retreat from Mons.

Then the polling. Here is more simultaneous confusion. In a panic the agent has collected every possible voter, including the maimed, the blind, and even the idiotic, and they are attesting before the officer, while protests against their validity as voters are being urged by the opposite party's lawyer. The candidates themselves are on the hustings, and in the distance Britannia's coach has broken down!

Finally, we see the Chairing of the Members—one of whom is depicted in the foreground, very insecure on his crazy throne, while the shadow of the other's approach is visible on a wall. That chairing has gone out should be a source of

extraordinary relief at Westminster. Indeed, were it still the custom, many a modern man—and certainly all the fat ones—would decide to seek fame elsewhere than in Parliament. Hogarth's candidate was peculiarly unfortunate in his bearers, one of whom has just been hit on the head by a flail, and another has collided with an old woman who was thrown down by a runaway litter of pigs. Meanwhile, the man with the flail fights a sailor with a cudgel, the cause of the combat being apparently the presence of a performing bear and a monkey; and, overcome by the fracas, a lady faints. Elsewhere, in the inn on the left, the defeated party are consoling themselves with a banquet, a practice that has by no means died out.

Only those who have been through the agonies and excitements of an election can say how far Hogarth has ceased to be a recorder of his fellow-countrymen; but one thing is certain, and that is that time has done nothing to impair the liveliness of his drama.

VI. Kensington Gardens

For more than half a century the humorist gravelled for matter has found the ugliness of the Albert Memorial an easy escape from his difficulties. To mention it is to raise a laugh.

But is it so ugly?

Conceiving that the time was ripe to put my own authentic impressions above hearsay, I made a pilgrimage to this shrine on an afternoon during the recent enchanted weather and subjected it to the most careful examination.

I was amply repaid. Alike when resting on the comfortable seats around its enclosure, taking in the structure as a whole (as well as the evolutions of a band of Girl Guides would permit), or when scrutinizing its sculptures at close range, I was pleasantly entertained, and I came to the decision that the Albert Memorial not only has more in it to attract than to repel, but is a very remarkable summary of the triumphs of Science and Art: as good a lesson book as bronze and stone could compile.

But even if this judgment is wrong, and the Albert Memorial really deserves the facile execration by you and me which so long has been its portion, that is not all. The subject is by no means closed. For you and I are not everybody; we are getting old and tired and exacting, and we are more disposed to complain of what we miss than to be happy with what we find. There are, in the world, others whose attitude is simpler than ours, whose views quite possibly are more important, to whose by no means foolish eyes the

Albert Memorial is beyond praise — adequate, stimulating, splendid. I mean children.

Sir Gilbert Scott, the designer of the Albert Memorial, knowing, either consciously or subconsciously—but the result is the same—that the principal frequenters of Kensington Gardens are children, behaved accordingly.

Those coloured pinnacles, those queens and angels high up in the sky under the golden cross, those gay mosaics against the blue, fill them with wondering delight. The emblematical groups of statuary — America with its buffalo and Red Indian, Asia with its elephant, Africa with its giant negro—must be thrilling, too; and when it comes to the great men around the base—the musicians (Gluck's head is really masterly), the poets, with Homer between Shakespeare and Milton, the painters, with Turner transformed to elegance, the architects, the sculptors, all so capable and serene and bland, and all exactly the same height—I am with the children in their admiration.

This mass meeting of the intelligentsia is a reminder of all that is best in literature and art, but most noticeably does it bring back the memory of great buildings—an unusual emphasis being laid upon those commonly anonymous and taken-for-granted masters, the architects. Indeed,

such is this emphasis that Giotto and Michael Angelo each comes into the scheme twice, once as painter and again for structural designs.

The Albert Memorial contains all the materials for a pageant; it is, in fact, a pageant crystallized; and if the myriad figures in the frieze and in the groups were one moonlight night released by the magician who turned them to stone and, coming to life, were to march through Kensington Gardens, they would make, not only an impressive sight, as they wound among the trees, with Asia's elephant leading, but as representative a procession of the shining ones of the earth as Mr. Louis Napoleon Parker could invent.

It is my belief that if only a few jackdaws could be persuaded to make their home in its higher crevices, the Albert Memorial would automatically take its place among the worshipful structures and be mocked at no more. For that is what is needed. Beneath the jackdaw's wing, where so many of our cathedrals repose, sanctity and authority would be conferred upon it. As one looks up to the golden summit, one is conscious of the absence of this discriminating and aloof yet humanizing bird, black against the sky, critical if not actually censorious in his speech, and an unmistakable indication that the building is noteworthy.

On Secret Passages

I WAS hearing the other day of an old house in Sussex where, while doing some repairs, the builders' men chanced on the mouth of an underground passage which they traced for two miles. Why should that discovery be interesting? Why is everything to do with underground passages so interesting? It is, I suppose, because they are usually secret, and the very word secret, no matter how applied (except perhaps to treaties), is alluring: secret drawers, secret cupboards, secret chambers; but the secret passage is best, because it leads from one place to another, and either war or love called it into being: war or love, or, as in the case of priests' hiding-holes, religious persecution, which is a branch of war.

Nothing can deprive the secret passage of its glamour: not all the Tubes, or subways, or Thames tunnelling, through which we pass so naturally day after day. Any private excavation is exciting; to enter a dark cellar, even, carries a certain

emotion. How mysterious are crypts! How awesome are the catacombs of Rome! How it brings back the lawless, turbulent past of Florence merely to walk through that long passage (not underground but overground, yet no less dramatic for that) which, passing above the Ponte Vecchio, unites the Pitti and the Uffizi and made it possible, unseen by the Florentines, to transfer bodies of armed men from one side of the river to the other!

It was the underground passage idea which gave the Druce Case such possibilities of mystery and romance. That a duke should masquerade as an upholsterer was in itself engaging; but without the underground passage connecting Baker Street with Cavendish Square the story was nothing more than an ordinary feuilleton. I shall always regret that it was not true; and even now some one ought to take it in hand and make a real romance of it, with the double-lived nobleman leaving his own home so regularly every morning (by the trap door), changing *en route* somewhere under Wigmore Street, and appearing unseen (by another trap door) in the Bazaar, all smug and punctual and rubbing his hands. It would be not only thrilling, but such a satire on ducal dulness. And then the great Law Court scenes, the rival heirs, the im-

passioned counsel, the vast sums at stake, the sanction of the judge to open the grave, and finally the discovery that there was no body there after all—nothing but bricks—and the fantastic story really was fact! There has been no better plot since *Monte Cristo,* and that, you remember, would be nothing had not the Abbé Faria excavated the secret passage from his cell through which Edmond was able to re-enter the world and start upon his career of symmetrical vengeance.

What, of course, gave such likelihood to the Druce allegations was the circumstance that the Duke of Portland spent so much of his life at Welbeck underground. A man who is known to do that must expect to be the subject of romantic exaggerations.

Another reason for wishing the Druce story to be true is that, if it were true, if one aristocrat thus duplicated and enriched his life, others also would do so; for there are no single instances; and this means that London would be honeycombed by secret underground passages constructed to promote these entertaining deceptions, and shopping would become an absorbing pastime, for we should never know with whom we were chaffering. But alas . . . !

Just as an ordinary desk takes on a new character directly one is told that it has a secret

drawer, so does even a whisper of a secret passage transfigure the most commonplace house. Arriving in Gloucester not so very long ago and needing a resting-place for the night, I automatically chose the hotel which claimed, in the advertisement, to date from the fourteenth century and possess an underground passage to the cathedral. The fact that, as the young lady in the office assured me, the passage, if it ever existed, no longer is accessible, made very little difference: the idea of it was the attraction and determined the choice of the inn. The Y.M.C.A. headquarters at Brighton on the Old Steyne ceases to be under the dominion of those initials—four letters which, for all their earnest of usefulness, are as far removed from clandestine intrigue as any four letters could be—and becomes a totally different structure when one is told that when, long before its conversion, Mrs. Fitzherbert lived there, an underground passage existed between it and the Pavilion for the use of the First Gentleman in Europe. Whether it is fact or fancy, I cannot say, but that the Pavilion has a hidden staircase and an underground passage to the Dome I happen to know. A hidden staircase has hardly fewer adventurous potentialities than a secret passage. I was told of one the other day while I was at Greenwich Hospital: in the wing built

by Charles II. is a secret staircase in the wall leading to the apartments set apart for (need I say?) Mistress Eleanor Gwynne? These rooms, such is the deteriorating effect of modernity, are now offices.

A Little Child

THE decision that the governess-cart must be given up meant that a new owner for Polly must be found.

Polly is a roan pony; very round in the barrel, and particularly so of late, when there has been no food but meadow-grass. She had been with us (this is my neighbour's story, not mine: a very charming neighbour who keeps her temper at croquet)—Polly had been with us so long as to become, as ponies peculiarly can, a member of the family, so that to part with her savoured of treachery. Necessity, however, knows no law and nourishes no memory, and the distasteful preparations were therefore begun. The first was the framing of the advertisement; which is not the simple matter that it might appear to be, because so much depends upon the choice of adjective. The selected word must both allure and (in our case) keep within the bounds of truth. What are the qualities most valued in a pony, we had to ask ourselves. Celerity? Polly was fixed

in her determination not to exceed the speed limit, at any rate on outward journeys. Willingness? Polly could be desperately stubborn. Strength? Yes, she was strong. Youth? Well, she came to us ten years ago and she was no foal then. After much serious deliberation, compared with which Versailles Conferences are mere exchanges of persiflage, it was decided to describe Polly either as "strong useful pony" or "useful strong pony." Further deliberations fixed the phrase as "Pony, strong, useful," and the advertisement was dispatched to the local rag, as our very worthy county chronicle is too often called.

Next came the question of what price was to be asked. Here expert opinion was resorted to, in the shape of Mr. Edmead, the butcher. No one knows more about ponies than butchers do, and Mr. Edmead is exceptionally wise.

"Taking everything into consideration," he said, "I think that twenty-five pounds would be a fair price."

We clung to each other for support. Twenty-five pounds! And we had given only nine pounds all those years ago. Why had we not made pony-breeding a hobby? The War, Mr. Edmead went on to explain, had rendered ponies more valuable. Yes, taking everything into consideration, twenty-

five pounds was a fair price. We ought to get that. In fact, if he had been in need of a pony he would have given that himself; but just then he was well supplied, and Polly was, he feared, not quite fast enough for him. Good morning.

Men who want to buy a pony have a strong resemblance to each other. They are clean-shaven and wear hard round hats, and the collars of their overcoats are carelessly treated so that they are half up and half down. They carry sticks. Also, although they want a pony, they don't want one at quite such a figure. All the men who came to see Polly were furthermore alike in agreeing that she was no doubt a useful strong pony, even a strong useful pony, but she was not for them. Day after day Polly was examined. They opened her mouth and shook their heads, they felt her knees and her hocks, they looked at her with narrow eyes from near by and from far, they rattled their sticks in their hard hats, they gave her sudden cuts and prods. But they didn't buy.

We began to get desperate. Much as we esteemed Polly, now that she was to be sold we wanted to be rid of her. Things should be done quickly. And then came a market gardener, a large, rubicund, genial man named Fox. And Polly was again led forth and again subjected to

every test known to pony-buyers. All was going well, and would have gone well, but for Vivian. Who, you say, is Vivian? Vivian is a small boy who had known Polly intimately all his life, and who by some mischance wandered out from his lessons in the morning-room at the precise moment when Mr. Fox, who obviously was attracted by Polly, was making up his mind to pay the full money. Vivian, I should explain, is one of those ingratiating little boys who look upon the world as a sphere existing solely to provide them with friends, and who attach themselves with the strongest bands to open-air manual labourers. No sooner did Vivian see Mr. Fox's benevolent features than he added him to his collection.

"Run away, Vivian," I said. "It's not play-time yet, and we're busy."

"Are you going to buy Polly?" Vivian asked Mr. Fox by way of a suitable rejoinder to my command.

"I was thinking about it," said Mr. Fox, adding to me, "How old do you call her, ma'am? She looks to me about twelve."

The figure was so low that I nodded assent but Vivian spoilt it by exclaiming, "Oh, mother, and Mr. Brooks says she's seventeen if she's a day, and I'm sure she's a day."

Mr. Fox became thoughtful. "Mr. Brooks said that, did he?" he remarked.

I felt that I couldn't tell Vivian again to go in, because it would look as though I feared his frankness; which, to be candid, I did. All I could do was to hope for the best.

"She's quiet enough; used to traffic and all that?" Mr. Fox asked.

Then Vivian began to laugh. This trick of laughter over retrospection—chewing the cud of old jokes—we have always rather admired in him; his chuckles are very engaging; but now I trembled, and not without reason.

"Don't you remember, mother," he began, "that day when she was frightened by the traction engine and ran into the grocer's shop?"

Mr. Fox, in whose large hand my son's minute one was now reposing, looked grave.

"That's against her in my business," he said.

"Oh, but," I explained, "that was a very long time ago. She's quite steady now. Don't you remember, Vivian, it was on your fifth birthday?"

"No," said Vivian, "that was on my seventh birthday—something funny always happens on my birthdays," he explained to Mr. Fox—"it was on my fifth birthday that Polly fell down."

"She's been down, has she?" said Mr. Fox ominously.

The rest of it is too tragic. I had no intention of concealing anything; Mr. Edmead knew the pony's whole history when he valued her; but Vivian's presence made me nervous, painfully self-conscious; I felt my face burning and knew that I must be crimson.

Mr. Fox, I will admit, played the game. He asked Vivian no questions; indeed he talked of other things than defective ponies; but I could see his mind working; I could see pound after pound dropping away from the grand total.

Well, that's the story. Mr. Fox led Polly away some ten minutes later, leaving in her stead a cheque. But it was not for twenty-five pounds—Vivian saw to that.

The moral? The moral is: when your husband is in Mesopotamia and the time comes to sell the pony, lock your cherubic son in the nursery.

The Italian Question

THERE are, no doubt, matters of importance which must always agitate the minds of Italian senators and the souls of Italian reformers; the country of Dante, Garibaldi, and D'Annunzio cannot for long be without deep and vital problems, political and social: but for me, in that otherwise delectable land, the dominant question is, What becomes of the mosquito while you are hunting for him? (I say "him," although, of course, there are supporters of the theory that mosquitoes are feminine. But I know he is a he, and I know his name, too: it is, for obvious reasons, Macbeth.)

This is my procedure. I undress, then I put on a dressing-gown and slippers, and, lifting the mosquito curtains, I place the candle inside them on the bed. Then, with the closest scrutiny, I satisfy myself that there is no mosquito inside, as indeed Eleanora, the handmaid, had done some hours earlier, when she made the bed. "*Niente, niente,*" she had assured me, as she always does.

None the less, again I go carefully round it, examining the net for any faulty hanging which might let in an insect ascending with malice from the floor.

This being done, I creep through, blow out the candle, and go to sleep.

I have slept perhaps an hour when a shrill bugle call, which I conceive in my dreams to be the Last Trump, awakens me, and as I awake I realize once again the melancholy fact that it is no Last Trump at all, but that there is, as there always is, a mosquito inside the curtains.

Already he has probably bitten me in several places; at any cost he must be prevented from biting me again. I sit up and feel my face all over to discover if my beauty has been assailed; for that is the thing I most dread. (Without beauty what are we?) I lie quite still while I do this, straining to catch his horrid song again; and suddenly there it is, so near that I duck my head swiftly, nearly ricking my neck in doing so.

This confirming my worst fears, there is nothing for it now but to lift the curtains, slip out on to the cold stone floor, light the candle, and once again go through the futile but necessary movement of locating and expelling a mosquito.

That there will be none to expel, I know.

None the less I crawl about and peer into every

corner. I shake the clothes, I do everything that can be done short of stripping the curtains, which I am too sleepy to do. And then I blow out the candle for the second time and endeavour to fall asleep again.

But this time it is more difficult: Macbeth has performed his pet trick too thoroughly. At last, however, I drowse away, again to be galvanized suddenly into intense and dreadful vigilance by the bugle shrilling an inch from my ear.

And so once again I get up and once again the pest vanishes into nothing. . . .

The next time I don't care a soldo if he is there or not, I am so tired; and the rest of the night is passed in a half-sleep, in which real mosquitoes and imaginary mosquitoes equally do their worst, and I turn no hair. And then, some years later, the blessed dawn breaks and spreads and another Italian night of misery passes into glorious day; and, gradually recognizing this bliss, I sit up in bed and begin to tear away at the fresh poison in my poor hands and wrists, which were like enough to a map of a volcanic island in the Pacific yesterday, but now are poignantly more so.

And suddenly, as I thus scratch, I am conscious of a motionless black speck on the curtain above me. . . .

It is—yes—no—yes—it is Macbeth.

I agitate the gauze, but he takes no notice; I approach my hand, a movement which in his saner moments he would fly from with the agility of electricity; he remains still. He is either dead or dazed.

I examine him minutely and observe him to be alive, and the repugnant truth is forced upon me that he is not merely drunk, but drunk with my blood. That purple tide must be intoxicating; and his intemperance has been his ruin.

There is only one thing to be done. I have no paltry feelings of revenge; but his death is indicated. The future must be considered. And so I kill him. It is done with the greatest ease. He makes no resistance at all: merely, dying, saluting me with my own blood. It is odd to have it thus returned.

A good colour, I think, and get up, conscious of no triumph.

Then, going to the glass, I discern a red lump on my best feature. . . .

On Shops and Stalls

MOST people who do not keep shops have, I suppose, at one time or other thought that to keep a shop might be fun; of course, keeping it their own way, selling only what they liked, to whom they liked. No vulgar trade notions at all! The fact that there is no nursery game so popular as keeping shop probably proves this. And none is more popular, except, perhaps, among French country childen, who prefer the game of market—each one presiding over a different stall, stocked with the most ingenious miniature counterfeits of vegetables and fruit fashioned chiefly from wild flowers and leaves, and all shouting against each other with terrific French volubility and not a little French wit.

We seldom go so far as actually to open an establishment, but we play with the idea. One of my friends has for years projected a London centre for all the most interesting and vivid European pottery, and if only she could assemble it and maintain the supply, I have little doubt of

her success. But the chances are that it will never materialize, the people who *do* things being so rare. Another is at this moment excitedly planning a restaurant in a neighbourhood where one seems peculiarly to be needed, as it is chiefly populated by dwellers in flats, the motto of which is to be "Where to dine when cook goes out"; but that, too, will probably end in talk.

One would say, on the face of it, that a shop opened in a locality where that kind of shop did not previously exist would have a better chance than a shop opened next door to another shop of the same kind—apart from any unpleasantness that such contiguity might produce. But the methods of business are inscrutable, and there seem to be countless ways, often in direct opposition to each other, of conducting it successfully. One would, at the first blush, have called this principle of scientific selection and segregation the soundest; and yet that of congregation seems to be just as sensible: so that while one man succeeds because he is the only tailor in the street, another man can be even more successful because he is in a street where every other establishment is a tailor's too. There are also the antagonistic principles of ostentation and self-effacement, each again apparently satisfactory: so that one hatter, for example, succeeds because

he inhabits a palace of light, and another because you can hardly see through the grimy panes of his old-fashioned and obsolete windows. There are, furthermore, the antipodal theories of singularity and plurality: so that one draper makes as good a thing as he wants out of a single shop, and another rises to wealth by dint of opening twenty shops at once.

And then there are the business people who thrive by apparently doing no business. We all know of shops which no one was ever seen to enter.

But to select one's line . . .?

There was once a man who, without any special training, decided that he would start business in London; and he came to town to prospect and make up his mind, which was curiously blank and receptive. In walking about he was struck by the number of old curiosity shops in the neighbourhood of the British Museum and South Kensington Museum, which led to the inference, hitherto unsuspected by him, but known to the dealers, that there is something exciting in the air of those places, so that the visitor, having seen many odd things, wishes to acquire some for himself. All his plans to establish himself in London failed, however, because he could not obtain a site for a monumental mason's yard opposite Westminster Abbey.

My own ambition, if ever I took to keeping a shop, would be merely to be in a congenial line of business. Some things are interesting to sell, and some most emphatically are not. Old books would appear to be an ideal commodity; but this is far from the case, because I should want not to sell them but to keep them. Pictures, too—how could one part with a good one? And, equally, how permit a customer to be so misguided as to pay money for a bad one? A fruit-shop would be a not unpleasant place to move about in, were it not that it is one of my profoundest beliefs that fruit ought not to be sold at all, but given away. The tobacconist's was once an urbane and agreeable career; but it is so no longer. To-day the tobacconist is a mere cog in a vast piece of machinery called a Trust; and the tobacco-shop is as remote from the old divan, where connoisseurs of the leaf met and tested and talked, as the modern chemist's, with its photograph frames and "seasonable gifts," is remote from the home of Rosamund's purple jar.

That ingenious and adventurous tobacconist, Mr. Godall, revisiting the London which he found, or made, so like Baghdad, would have to discover a new kind of headquarters. Perhaps he would open an oyster-bar (it was in an oyster-bar near Leicester Square that the young man

proffered the cream tarts); more likely an American bar. But if he really wanted to observe human nature at its most vulnerable and impulsive—that is, at night—he would take a coffee-stall. After ten o'clock, the coffee-stall men are the truest friends that poor humanity has. There is a coffee-stall within a few yards of my abode; and no matter at what hour I return, the keeper of it is always brisk and jovial, with the hottest beverages that ever were set to timid lips. His stall is surrounded by hungry and thirsty revellers, chiefly soldiers, not infrequently accompanied by the fair. Every one calls him by his Christian name, and every one talks and is jolly. And no matter at what hour in the night I wake, or from what disconcerting dream, I am always at once secure in my mind that the old recognizable world is still about me and I have not passed over in my sleep, because the voices and laughter about the coffee-stall fill the air. "Good," I say, "I am still here." Now it would be a pleasant thing, and prove one's life not to have been lived in vain, to be able to minister in the small hours gaily to so many heroes, and incidentally to impart to wakeful and disquieted neighbours reassurance of stability.

Clicquot Well Won

MY hostess and her daughter met me at the station in the little pony-cart and we set off at a gentle trot, conversing as we went. That is to say, they asked questions about London and the great wicked world, and I endeavoured to answer them.

It was high if premature summer; the sky was blue, the hedges and the grass were growing almost audibly, the birds sang, the sun blazed, and, to lighten the burden, I walked up two or three hills without the faintest enthusiasm.

Just after the top of the last hill, when I had again resumed my seat (at the risk once more of lifting the pony into the zenith), the ladies simultaneously uttered a shrill cry of dismay.

"Look!" they exclaimed; "there's Bunty!"

I looked, and beheld in the road before us a small West Highland terrier, as white as a recent ratting foray in a wet ditch would allow.

"Bunty! Bunty! you wicked dog!" they cried; "how dare you go hunting?"

To this question Bunty made no reply, but merely subsided under the hedge, where a little shade was to be had, in an attitude of exhaustion tempered by wariness.

"How very naughty!" said my hostess. "I left her in the house."

"Yes," said the daughter, "and if she's going to go off hunting like this what on earth shall we do? There'll be complaints from every one. She's never done it before."

"Come, Bunty!" said my hostess, in the wheedling tones of dog-owners whose dogs notoriously obey their slightest word. But Bunty sat tight.

"If we drive on perhaps she'll follow," said the daughter, and we drove on a few yards; but Bunty did not move.

We stopped again, while coaxing noises were made, calculated to soften the hearts of rocks; but Bunty refused to stir.

"She'll come on later," I suggested.

"Oh, no," said her elderly mistress, "we couldn't risk leaving her here, when she's never gone off alone before. Bunty! Bunty! don't be so naughty. Come along, there's a dear little Bunty."

But Bunty merely glittered at us through her white-hair entanglement and remained perfectly still.

Strange dogs are not much in my line; but since my hostess was no longer very active, and the daughter was driving, and no one else was present, there seemed to be a certain inevitableness about the proposition which I then made that I should get out and bring the miscreant in.

"Oh, would you mind?" my hostess said. "She won't bite, I promise you. She's a perfect dear."

Trying hard to forget how painful to legs or hands can be the smart closing of the snappy jaws of dogs that won't bite, I advanced stealthily towards Bunty, murmuring ingratiating words.

When I was quite close she turned over on her back, lifted her paws, and obviously commended her soul to Heaven; and I had therefore no difficulty in lifting her up and carrying her to the trap.

Her mistresses received her with rapture, disguised, but by no means successfully, by reproach and reproof, and we were beginning to drive on again, when an excited voice called upon us to stop, and a strange lady, of the formidable unmarried kind, with a very red face beneath a purple parasol, confronted us.

"What," she panted, "is the meaning of this outrage? How dare you steal my dog?"

"Your dog, madam?" I began.

"It's no use denying it," she burst in, "I saw you do it. I saw you pick it up and carry it to the trap. It's—it's monstrous. I shall go to the police about it."

Meanwhile, it cannot be denied, the dog was showing signs of delight and recognition such as had previously been lacking.

"But——" began my hostess, who is anything but quarrelsome.

"We ought to know our own dog when we see it," said the daughter, who does not disdain a fight.

"Certainly," said the angry lady, "if you *have* a dog of your own."

"Of course we have," said the daughter; "we have a West Highland named Bunty."

"This happens to be my West Highland, named Wendy," said the lady, "as you will see if you look on the collar. My name is there too—Miss Morrison, 14 Park Terrace, W. I am staying at Well House Farm."

And it was so.

It was on the tip of my tongue to point out that collars, being easily exchangeable, are not evidence; but I thought it better that any such suggestion should come from elsewhere.

"It is certainly very curious," said the daughter, submitting the features of the dog to the minutest scrutiny; "if it is not Bunty it is her absolute double."

"It is not Bunty, but Wendy," said Miss Morrison coldly; "and I shall be glad if you will give her to me."

"But——" the daughter began.

"Yes, give the lady the dog," said the mother.

In the regrettable absence of Solomon, who would, of course, have cut the little devil in two, there was nothing for it but to surrender; and the couple went off together, the dog exhibiting every sign of pleasure.

Meanwhile the daughter whipped up the pony, and we soon entered the gates.

In the drive, awaiting us, was a West Highland terrier named Bunty.

"There!" cried the ladies, as they scrambled out and flung themselves on her.

"Of course she's not a bit like that Wendy thing really," said the mother.

"Now that I come to look at her I can see heaps of difference," said the daughter.

"None the less," I interjected, "you turned a very honest man into a thief, and a dog-thief at that; and he insists on reparation."

"Yes, indeed," said the mother, "it is really too bad. What reparation can we make?"

I don't pretend that my feelings are completely soothed, but the Clicquot 1904 which took the the place of claret at dinner that evening was certainly very good.

My Friend Flora

"HOW much is this bunch?" I asked of the flower-woman at the corner.

"A shilling," she replied, "but you can have it for sixpence. I hate the sight of it."

Now here was an oddity in a world of self-centred, acquisitive tradespeople: a dealer who decried her own wares. Obviously flower-women can have temperaments.

I asked her what there was about palm, as we call those branches of willow with the fluffy, downy buds on them, that so annoyed her.

"It's such stupid stuff," she explained. "I can understand people buying daffodils or tulips or violets, because they're pretty or sweet, but not this dried-up stuff with the little kittens."

The remark set me wondering to what extent dealers in other articles are perplexed by their customers' preferences. (Some milliners, I hope.) For the most part we are encouraged by the shopkeeper to follow our own inclinations. His

taste may be utterly different, but he doesn't impose it on us; he ventures to suggest only when there are varying prices and we seem unduly disposed to the lowest. But this old lady was prepared, long before the bargaining stage had set in, to knock off fifty per cent. and traduce the goods as well. Surely a character.

"And that's not all," she added. "What do you think a lady—calls herself a lady—said to me just now when she bought threepennyworth? She said it lasted a year. Fancy telling a poor flower-woman that!"

We went on to talk of her calling. I found her an "agreeable blend" (as the tobacconists say) of humour and resignation; and very practical.

"Why are your flowers," I asked her, "so much better than the flowers of the man the other side of the road?"

"Because he takes his home at night," she said. "You should never do that. If I've got any unsold, I leave them at the fire-station and then they're fresh in the morning. But I don't often have any left over."

This was, I should say, a day of acute discomfort: it had been bitterly raining since early morning, and yet there was no bitterness in her. She was merely resigned. Very wet, but cheer-

fully apathetic. "When it's cold and wet like this," I asked, "is life worth living?"

"Of course," was her splendid answer; "aren't there the nights?"

Rather fine that—even if as a commentary on the wakeful hours a little acid. And for those who can sleep, how true! "Aren't there the nights?" I must remember the solace when next the cynic or the misanthrope girds at sunless noons.

Of her philosophy she then gave me another taste, for, observing a great mass of loose coins, many of them silver, lying in the basket, I asked if she were not afraid of a thief snatching at it. "Oh, no," she said. "But I don't always have it there. It's because it's so wet to-day. Counting helps."

My guess would have been that although the life of flower-women calls for philosophy, for philosophy to respond is by no means the rule; and her consolation and cheerfulness made me very happy. Yet what a penance much of their lives must be! First of all, there is the weather. Wet or fine, hot or cold, they must be out in it, and stationary at that. What to place second and third I do not know, but there is the perishable character of the stock-in-trade to be considered, and, when fogs and frosts interfere, the chance of being unable

to collect any stock-in-trade at all. But exposure must be the crucial strain.

The whole question of the motionless, receptive attitude to the elements is interesting to me, who catch cold several times a day. How these people can stand it is a constant mystery. That blind man, for instance, at the little door of the Temple just below the Essex Street archway—ever since I can remember London he has been there, with his matches, always serene, no matter what new buffetings Heaven has for him.

The blind in particular seem to become indifferent to climatic extremes; and there must be in every one's cognizance two or three immovable sightless mendicants defying rain and chill. Every town in the country has such landmarks, and all seem to retain their health. But I recollect that the blind man who used to sit in front of the Grand Hotel at Brighton forty years ago spelling out Holy Writ, while the dog at his feet collected coppers in a little box, always in winter wore mittens and a cap with ear-flaps, and had fingers red and swollen. Still, he endured. Whether with those red and swollen fingers he really deciphered the Evangel or merely repeated from memory, we never knew, but I can still hear the droning voice, "And Jesus said——"

This insensitiveness to January blasts and

February drenchings may be one of the compensations that the blind enjoy. Whatever else happens to them they never, perhaps, catch cold. And that is more than something.

But how odd that these stolid, shabby, and often rather battered old florists should be the middle-men and middle-women between the country and the city, but for whose indifference to pitiless skies so many town-dwellers would never see a blossom at all! There is nothing of the country about them, nothing of the garden—almost no Londoner less suggests the riot of a herbaceous border—and yet it is they who form the link between flower-bed and street.

"Well," I said, grasping the bunch of palm that the old flower-woman had sold me at such a sacrifice, "good-bye; I hope you'll empty your basket."

"And I hope you'll empty yours," she replied.

"Mine?" I said, "I haven't got one."

"Oh, yes, you have," said Flora: "every one's got a basket, only they don't always know where to take it."

A South Sea Bubble

"I WANT you," said my hostess, "to take in Mrs. Blank. She is charming. All through the War she has been with her husband in the South Seas. London is a new place to her."

Mrs. Blank did not look too promising. She was pretty in her way—"elegant" an American would have called her—but she lacked animation. However, the South Seas . . . ! Anyone fresh from the Pacific must have enough to tell to see soup, fish, and *entrée* safely through.

I began by remarking that she must find London a very complete change after the sun and placidity that she had come from.

"It's certainly noisier," she said; "but we had our share of rain."

"I thought it was always fine there," I remarked; but she laughed a denial and relapsed into silence.

She was one of those women who don't take soup, and this made the economy of her utterances the more unfair.

Racking my brain for a new start I fell back on those useful fellows, the authors. Presuming that anyone who had lived in that fascinating region —the promised land of so many of us who are weary of English climatic treacheries—would be familiar with the literature of it, I went boldly to work.

"The first book about the South Seas that I ever read," I said, "was Ballantyne's *Coral Island*."

"Indeed!" she replied.

I asked her if she too had not been brought up on Ballantyne, and she said no. She did not even know his name.

"He wrote for boys," I explained, rather lamely.

"I read poetry chiefly as a girl," she said.

"But surely you know Stevenson's *Island Nights' Entertainments*?" I said.

No, she did not. Was it nice?

"It's extraordinary," I said. "It gives you more of the atmosphere of the South Seas than any other work. And Louis Becke—you must have read him?" I continued.

No, she had not. She read very little. The last book she had read was on spiritualism.

"Not even Conrad?" I pursued. "No one has so described the calms and storms of the Pacific."

No, she remembered no story called Conrad.

I was about to explain that Conrad was the writer, not the written; but it seemed a waste of words, and we fell into a stillness broken only by the sound of knife and fork.

"Hang it! you shall talk," I said to myself; and then aloud, "Tell me all about copra. I have longed to know what copra is; how it grows, what it looks like, what it is for."

"You have come to the wrong person," she replied, with wide eyes. "I never heard of it. Or did you say 'cobra'? Of course I know what a cobra is—it's a snake. I've seen them at the Zoo."

I put her right. "Copra, the stuff that the traders in the South Seas deal in."

"I never heard of it," she said. "But then why should I? I know nothing about the South Seas."

My stock fell thirty points and I crumbled bread nervously, hoping for something sensible to say; but at this moment "half-time" mercifully set in. My partner on the other side turned to me suavely and asked if I thought the verses in *Abraham Lincoln* were a beauty or a blemish; and with the assistance of the London stage, some new novels, and the universal unrest I sailed serenely into port. She was as easy and

agreeable a woman as that other was difficult, and before she left for the drawing-room she had invited me to lunch and I had accepted.

As I said good night to my hostess I asked why she had told me that my first partner had been in the South Seas. She said that she had said nothing of the sort; what she had said was that during the War she had been stationed with her husband, Colonel Blank, at Southsea.

An East-Anglian Bookman

THE postscript to a leter from New Zealand which reached me a few days ago mentioned Green's *Extracts from the Diary of a Lover of Literature* as a book that might be found nutritious. Having obtained it and read it, I am grateful for the hint. Thomas Green, the author of this desultory, fastidious, and highly intelligent work, was for a while a barrister on the Norfolk Circuit, but on succeeding, at the age of twenty-five, to his father's property, he settled at Ipswich, where he had been educated, and gave himself to the pleasures of reading, with the composition of an occasional pamphlet, chiefly political or philosophical, until his death in 1825. The *Diary* ranges only from 1796 to 1800, and was not published until 1810; but later the Rev. John Mitford of Benhall, Suffolk, printed, in his capacity as Sylvanus Urban, Esquire, further passages from it in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, a gossipy and erudite periodical the revival of which would do no harm to the quality of our bookstalls.

Although he married, Green is of what might be called the bachelor school of critics and tasters, the school of which Gray and Walpole and Lamb and FitzGerald and Cowper are leaders. Second thoughts remind me that FitzGerald was married, as I ought never to have forgotten, since I used to visit that stately old lady, his widow (Bernard Barton's strong-minded daughter), every week not long before her death; but the mere forgetting may be taken as some indication of the lightness of the matrimonial gyves on the husband's wrists. To all intents and purposes FitzGerald was a bachelor. A further bond between him and Green is topographical; Green living his retired, contemplative life at Ipswich, FitzGerald at Woodbridge. But it is improbable that they had any intercourse, for FitzGerald was only fifteen when Green died. I extract a few of Green's *obiter scripta*:—

Finished Gibbon's Memoirs of himself — an exquisite morceau of literature, but which might have been rendered far more interesting by anecdotes of such of his acquaintance as were distinguished characters—a disclosure, properly conducted, of which I cannot see the harm; and by less reserve on the subject of his progress in infidelity—a topic which the Biographer touches with all the caution of the Historian.

Looked over Swift's Journal to Stella, in the 20th Vol. of his Works. I can allow for the relaxations of greatness; trifling, however, as their general cast and complexion may be, they usually confess, somewhere and by

accident, the stock from whence they sprung: but these Letters are, uniformly, and throughout, the most childish things I ever read; and it is wonderful how such a man as Swift could possibly keep his mind *down* to such a level, for any length of time.

It is amazing that Warton should have passed, without censure, and even with some sort of *retrospective* approbation, the flattest line Pope ever published. V. 49, 6th Epis. of Horace, B. 1:

So known, so honoured, at the House of Lords.

To make amends, he violently reprobates as coarse and vulgar, an expression, which, in its place is felicitous enough. V. 131, 2nd Epis. of Horace, B. 2:

Each had a gravity *would make you split.*

The colloquial form of the phrase, *here* adds greatly to its spirit.

[At Twickenham] Paused, with much interest, opposite Pope's villa and garden; his favourite willow on the lawn, propped up by stakes; and exhibiting, abstractedly considered, an unsightly spectacle. Great men should plant trees of longer duration: we might still muse under the broad and majestic shade of Shakespear's *Oak.*

Dipped into Bacon's Essays; so pregnant with just, original, and striking observations on every topic which is touched, that I cannot select what pleases me most. For reach of thought, variety and extent of view, sheer solid and powerful sense, and admirable sagacity, what works of man can be placed in competition with these wonderful effusions.

Finished Lord Bacon's Letters, edited by Birch. It is grievous to see this great man, who appears from various passages fully sensible of his vast powers and attainments, and impressed with a just confidence of the weight he would have with posterity, eternally cringing, and a beggar, to men so infinitely beneath him, and whom he must have felt to be so. One curious disclosure of his, in the heads of a

proposed conference with Buckingham, struck me most forcibly. He was proposing to offer his services to go over to France to conduct a secret negotiation: "I have somewhat" says this Lord of human kind, "of the French: I love birds, as the King does; and have some childish-mindedness wherein we shall consent"!

I cannot discover that Johnson [in the *Lives of the Poets*] has farther unfolded his principles of criticism. He had probably digested them into no very exact scheme in his own mind; but trusted, to what he knew would rarely fail him—his immediate sagacity whenever an occasion for critical exertion occurred.

Read Milton's Samson Agonistes;—a noble Poem, but a miserable Drama. Comus, though a much earlier, is surely a much finer composition:—after all, however, give me the *Gothic* Architecture of Shakespear.

Visited for the first time (so strangely is it buried in obscurity) St. Stephen's Church, Walbrook. The interior architecture, rich, elegant, chaste; and (what may be deemed its appropriate and distinguishing merit) effecting much in a small compass. I doubt whether a Gothic building could have been constructed on the same scale, which would have produced an equal effect. The tendency, it is true, of the Gothic style, is to enlarge, and of the Grecian, as it is called, to reduce, the apparent size of the edifices to which they are applied: but the Gothic Artist must have positive magnitude to work upon, or the imposition arising from real disproportion and seeming irregularity, would be detected and despised; whereas that exquisite order and symmetry, by which the whole of a Grecian structure, however stupendous in bulk, is brought at once within the grasp, still retain their charm, however limited the scale on which they are employed, and perhaps carry with them on this occasion something of the real majesty and grandeur of the objects with which they are usually associated.

The Diarist is so good about Turner, that one would like to have more of him on painting. It required not a little vision to write thus of Turner as early as June 2nd, 1797 :—

Visited the Royal Exhibition. Particularly struck with a sea view by Turner—fishing vessels coming in, with a heavy swell, in apprehension of a tempest gathering in the distance, and casting, as it advances, a night of shade ; while a parting glow is spread with fine effect upon the shore. The whole composition, bold in design, and masterly in execution. I am entirely unacquainted with the artist ; but if he proceeds as he has begun, he cannot fail to become the first in his department.

And again, two years later :—

Visited the Royal Exhibition ; and was again struck and delighted with Turner's Landscapes ; particularly with fishermen in an evening—a calm before a storm, which all nature attests is silently preparing, and seems in death-like stillness to await : and Caernarvon Castle, the sun setting in gorgeous splendour behind its shadowy towers :—the latter in water colours ; to which he has given a depth and force of tone which I had never before conceived attainable with such untoward implements. Turner's views are not mere ordinary transcripts of nature : he always throws some peculiar and striking *character* into the scene he represents.

Among Green's suggestions for books that might be written, one, that did not fructify, was a "capital piece" to be composed in collaboration by Mrs. Radcliffe and Fanny Burney—"Mrs. R. furnishing the landscape and Miss B. the figures."

He wanted also, in 1796, a judicious selection from Dr. Johnson's talk, which must have been made since then again and again, and in the same year he writes "a catalogue of synonymes, executed with philosophical skill and philosophical discrimination, would be a valuable accession to English Literature"; but not until 1852 did Roget's *Thesaurus* appear.

There are blind spots in all of us, and Green was not without his. On 27th January 1798 I find him writing:—

> Looked over some of Gray's Poems. I am almost tempted to agree in Johnson's character of these compositions. There is an encumbered heaviness in them, an over-laboured obscurity, and vehement straining — even where he affects to trifle, very revolting to my taste.

From this, by a natural transition, we may pass to a passage describing a little town in the Isle of Wight later in the same year:—

> Had an agreeable sail to Newport, about five miles up the river Medina. Visited Carisbrook Castle, proudly crowning the summit of an eminence; but deficient in effect, from the want of picturesque accompaniments. Missed my friend Ogden, the old soldier, who on a previous excursion acted as Cicerone to the place; and was accustomed, at the conclusion, to exhibit *himself* as the greatest curiosity there, being the person in whose arms the immortal Wolfe expired. Found, on enquiry of his son, who has succeeded him in the office of guide, and who still preserves with religious veneration the General's cane, that the gallant veteran was gone to the grand and final muster, at which, sooner or later,

we must all appear. On my former visit, I was of course solicitous to enquire respecting the last moments of a Hero, on whose fall the arts of painting, poetry and sculpture, have conspired to throw so bright a blaze of glory. The old fellow assured me, that far from displaying the lively interest ascribed to him in the fate of the day, he appeared absorbed in his own sufferings, oppressed with debility and languor, and nearly insensible to what was passing around him. It is not pleasant to have illusions of this kind destroyed ; but as the natural propensity of my informant would be, rather to aggrandise, than depretiate, the fame of one with whom he must feel his own so nearly connected, there can be little reason to question the truth and accuracy of his representation.

There is not enough of Green's conversations with the living. His days too much with the dead were passed. But Horne Tooke he knew, and there are two references to him. Thus :—

At the very time he was giving his most marked encouragement to the "Rights of Man," I well remember his speaking to me of the author in these emphatical terms, "Paine's intentions I believe to be honest ; but he is ignorant of almost every thing, and he hates every thing of which he is ignorant."

And again, on Fox :—

I well remember Horne Tooke's sarcastically telling me on the Hustings at Covent-Garden, that he regarded him as a *cunning*, but not as a *wise*, man ! Exactly, I conceive, the reverse of the truth. Mr. Fox's wisdom, few but Mr. Tooke will be disposed to question ; it is a species of wisdom, however, if ever there was one, which neither his supporters nor his opponents can reproach with guile ; and rarely, I

believe, has this illustrious Statesman had occasion to blush, at proving himself too shrewd, in those cases—and such Mr. Burke has acutely remarked there are—in which a man of honour would be ashamed *not* to have been imposed upon.

Burke, in his more intimate moments, we find in some talk which Green had with his friend Mr. M. on June 13th, 1799. This is good, and I should guess authentic :—

Passed the last Christmas with Burke at Beaconsfield ; and described, in glowing terms, the astonishing effusions of his mind in conversation. Perfectly free from all taint of affectation : would enter, with cordial glee, into the sports of children ; rolling about with them on the carpet, and pouring out, in his gambols, the sublimest images mingled with the most wretched puns. Anticipated his approaching dissolution, with due solemnity, but perfect composure. Minutely and accurately informed, to a wonderful exactness, with respect to every fact relative to the French Revolution. M. lamented, with me, Fox's strange deportment during this tremendous crisis ; and attributed it, partly to an ignorance respecting these facts and partly to a misconception of the true character of the democratic philosophers of the day, whom he confounded with the old advocates for reform, with whose genuine spirit he appeared in conversation totally unacquainted, ascribing the temper and views imputed to them entirely to the calumny of party. Idle and uninquisitive, to a remarkable degree. Burke said of him, with a deep sigh, "He is made to be loved." Fox said of Burke, that M. would have praised him too highly, had *that* been possible ; but that it was not in the power of man to do justice to his various and transcendent merits. Declared, he would set his hand to every part of the Preliminary Discourse on the Law of Nature and Nations, except the account of Liberty—a subject which he considered

with Burke, as purely practical, and incapable of strict definition. Of Gibbon, M. neatly remarked, that he might have been cut out of a corner of Burke's mind, without his missing it.

It would be interesting to know who M. was. Quite possibly Matthew Montagu, Elizabeth Montagu (the Blue Stocking)'s nephew.

On Epitaphs

NOT long ago I was staying in a village where the shortest cut to the inn lay through the churchyard, and passing and repassing so often I came to know the dead inhabitants of the place almost better than the living. Not with the penetrating knowledge of the author of *Spoon River Anthology*—that very extraordinary and understanding book,—but in a kindly superficial way. Indeed, considering that they were total strangers and their acquaintance not now to be made by any but the followers of those doughty knights of the round (or square) séance table, Sir Oliver and Sir Conan, some of these dead people were absurdly often in my thoughts; but that was because of their names. Such names! Many of course were no longer legible, for Father Time had either obliterated them with his patient finger, dipped now in lichen and now in moss, or upon them his tears had fallen too steadily. But many remained and some of them were wonderful. Has it ever been explained why

the dead have more remarkable names than the living? Did any one ever meet "in the form" a Lavender Wiseways? Yet there was a Lavender Wiseways lying beneath one of those stones. There was her sister too, lying close beside—Lavinia Wiseways. Neither had married; but then how could they have performed a deed which thereby lost them such distinction! And who now exchanges market greetings, with a gaitered gentleman named Paradine Ebb? Yet once there was a Paradine Ebb, farmer, not such a great distance from London, to shake by the hand, and chat to, and buy fat stock from, and, I hope, share a cordial glass with. And who—but if I continue I shall betray the village's name, and that is against good manners. Too many real names get into print in these inquisitive days.

It was not however of strange dead names that I was thinking when I took up my pen, but of the epitaphs on the tombstones, sometimes so brief and simple, sometimes so long and pompous, and almost always withholding everything of real importance about the occupants of the narrow cells beneath and almost always affecting to despise the precious gift of life. Why should not some one, greatly daring, go so far as to bid the mason engrave a tribute to the world that is being left behind? Would that be so impious?

There is no indication that any of these dead ever enjoyed a moment.

Something like this, for instance:—

HERE LIES
HENRY ROBINSON
WHO LIVED IN THE BELIEF—AND, WITH MANY FAILURES, DID HIS BEST TO ACT UP TO IT—THAT IF YOU SPEND YOUR TIME IN TRYING TO MAKE THINGS BETTER IN THIS WORLD, THE NEXT CAN TAKE CARE OF ITSELF.

The whole insincere suggestion of most churchyards now is that life has been spent in a vale of tears: a long tribulation, merely a preparation for another and better world. But we know that that is not usually the case, and we know that many lives, although unrelated to graveyard ideas of decorum and insurance, are happier than not. There is in the God's Acre of which I am writing more than appeal to the living to be wary of earthly serenity: surely a very unfair line for the dead to take and not unremindful of the fable of the fox and his tail. An elaborate stone close by the lych gate has a series of dreary couplets warning the passer-by that the next grave to be dug may be his; and on the assumption that he is being too happy he is adjured to a morbid thought-

fulness. The dead might be kinder than that, more generous, more altruistic! I should like a headstone to bear some such motto as

"Die and Let Live."

But not only do the epitaphs suggest that life below is a snare; they are by no means too encouraging about the life above. The spirit they proclaim is a very poor one. Nothing can make death attractive; but even if some golden-mouthed advocate should arise whose eloquence half persuaded, the churchyard would beat him. The damp of it, the gloom of it, the mouldiness of it, the pathetic unconvincing efforts at resignation which the slabs record! We ought to be braver; more heartening to others. A rector who allowed none but cheerful epitaphs would be worth his tithes.

Would there be any very impossible impropriety in such an inscription as this:—

Here Lies
JOHN SMITH
Who found earth pleasant and rejoiced in its beauties and enjoyed its savours; who loved and was loved; and who would fain go on living. He died reluctantly, but wishes well to all who survive him.

Carpe diem.

Reading that, the stranger would not necessarily (I hope) be transformed into a detrimental Hedonist.

And now and then a human foible might be recorded by the stone mason without risk of undermining society's foundations. When our friends are dead why should we not disclose a little? Some secrets are better out. Here for example:—

HERE LIES
(in no expectation of immortality)
THOMAS BROWN
HE WAS NO FRIEND OF THE CHURCH BUT HE PAID HIS WAY, INTERFERED WITH NONE OF HIS NEIGHBOURS, AND HIS WORD WAS HIS BOND.

What would happen if Thomas Brown's friends paid for such lapidary style as that? Would the world totter? Again:—

HERE LIES
MARY JONES
THE WIFE OF WILLIAM JONES. HONOUR HER MEMORY, FOR SHE WAS LENIENT WHEN HER HUSBAND WAS IN LIQUOR.

I should also like to see memorial verses beginning

Physicians sore
Long time I bore.

On Disguise

IT was pointed out that one of the most striking novelties of the Peace Day revels was the number of girls dressed as men, chiefly as soldiers and sailors. Men who were dressed as women—at least recognizably so—I did not observe, but then in a crowd at night they might be more difficult to detect, whereas no woman, not even Sir Vesta Tilley, can be a really plausible man. The idea dominating these girls was less to deceive than to be hilarious, and most of them, I am sure, before the evening was over, achieved genuine male company.

For a man to pretend to be a woman is a less savoury proposition; but it can be done without offence (as in *Charley's Aunt*), and I heard the other day a pleasant story of such a disguise, the hero of which is a comedian of great acceptance by the youthful every Christmas. This popular performer laid a wager with the *maître d'hôtel* of a famous London restaurant that some time or other within the coming year he would enter the

restaurant dressed as an old woman, and be served with lunch as though he were an ordinary customer. The *maître d'hôtel*, who had been maintaining that men dressed as women were, at any rate in broad daylight, always to be detected, accepted, and a sum was fixed sufficient to make the enterprise worth while, the conditions being that if the disguise were penetrated the *maître d'hôtel* should indicate the discovery by a somewhat idiomatic form of words, more suitable to be applied to a sham lady than a real one; and if the actor succeeded he should send for the manager and thank him for his lunch. Each winner would add a request for the amount of the bet.

A few weeks ago the comedian won. But the cream of the story is that during the year no fewer than three unoffending and genuine old ladies, as female as God created them, were, on different occasions, more than astonished to be accosted by the *maître d'hôtel* in the midst of their meals with a triumphant and not too refined catch-phrase, and to be asked for a tenner.

People look now so little at the clothes of others that disguise must have become easier than it was. The War brought so many strange costumes into being that we stare hardly at all, and at uniforms never. A man wearing a kilt, leggings, and spurs might, before the War, have

attracted attention; we now merely mutter, "Another of those Mounted Highlanders," and pass on. In fact, we look more at members of the no-hat brigade than at anyone else, and at them only to see if they are authentic bare-heads or chance to have their hats in their hands. None the less, the fun of disguise must be to be exhaustively thorough. Although the principal reasons for it are to assist in evading justice (the criminal) and to assist in pursuing crime (the detective), there are, I hope, a few whimsical humorists left who take to it for its own sake or to make things more possible. A dull July day with a north wind, such as in 1919 was the price of a divine May and June, might be made quite tolerable if we masqueraded through it and pulled the legs of our friends, like Sir Walter Scott's friend, the lady of the "Mystifications."

And I am sure that it would enable us to have better holidays. But we should have to be thorough: it is no use dressing up as a policeman and walking fast, or assuming the mien of a Jewish financier and taking long steps, or borrowing a scarecrow's wardrobe to beg in and forgetting to supplant our natural assurance with a cringe. In fact, all the real work is to come after the clothes are on. You may sit in Clark-

son's for a couple of hours having a beard attached to your face (as I once watched a friend of mine doing), but, when it is finished, you must look and behave not merely like a man with a beard, as he did, but like a bearded man. He came away so painfully aware of a transfigured chin that he collected every eye and the police began to follow him merely on suspicion.

Indeed, to carry a disguise well requires unremitting concentration. The walk comes first; one would have continually to remember it. Then the carriage of the hands. Dressed as a curate, for example, you would give it all away by strolling along with your hands in your pockets; just as if you affected to be a seller of motor-cars you would fail if you had them anywhere else. This need of unrelaxing thought is the reason why disguise would be such a useful ally of the holiday maker. The completest escape from one's ordinary preoccupations could be obtained by a resolute simulation of this kind. It is not enough to go to Brighton; that is only half a holiday. But to go to Brighton as a bishop, say, or a taxi-driver, an American soldier or an Indian law student, and keep it up — that would be a total change, a vacation indeed.

What the Sun did not see—for far too long

"ONCE upon a time," said the Sun, "there was a meadow surrounded by a flint wall, where I caused the buttercups to shine like burnished gold, and where the grass was high and green and as long as the pony and the donkey who inhabited the meadow would allow it to be. Here and there was a cowslip; while near the house were hen-coops with old hens in them whose anxious heads protruded through the bars querulously shouting instructions to their fluffy children.

"Such," said the Sun, "was the meadow, which was most interesting to me chiefly because it was the playground of a small but very vigorous and restless boy named Nobby, whose merry inquiring face it gave me peculiar pleasure to tan and to freckle.

"A small boy can do," said the Sun, "a thousand things in a meadow like this, even without the company of a donkey and a pony,

and Nobby did them all; while his collection of performing wood-lice was unique.

"But a morning came when he was absent. I was shining at my best, the buttercups were glowing, there was even an aeroplane manœuvring in the blue—which is still, I notice, a certain lure both to young and old—but no Nobby. The wood-lice crept about or rolled themselves into balls, all unnoticed and immune.

"'This is very odd,' I heard the pony say; 'he's never neglected us before.'

"'Passing strange,' said the donkey, who affected archaic speech. 'And on so blithe and jocund a morn too.'

"So saying they resumed their everlasting meal, but continually turned their eyes to the garden-gate through which Nobby would have to pass. I also kept my eyes wide for him; but all in vain; and what made it more perplexing was that Nobby's mother came in and fed the chickens, and Nobby's aunt came in with a rug and a book and settled down to be comfortable; and that meant that the boy was not absent on a visit to the town, because one of them would have gone too.

"'That settles it,' said the donkey, who had, for an ass, quite a lot of sense: 'Nobby is ill.'

"The donkey was right—or approximately so,

as I afterwards found out. Nobby was ill. That is to say, he was in bed, because that morning he had sneezed—not through looking up at me, but for no reason at all—and his mother, who was a very careful mother, had at once fetched the clinical thermometer and taken his temperature, and behold it was a hundred. So Nobby was not allowed to get up, but now lay there watching my rays pouring into the room, and listening to the buzz of the aeroplane, and longing to be out in the meadow with the donkey and the pony and the wood-lice.

"That, however, would never do; for 'It all comes,' his mother had said, 'of sitting about in that long grass so much, and so early in the year too'—a line of argument hardly likely to appeal to a small and vigorous boy who does not reckon summer by dates and to whom prudence is as remote as one-pound Treasury notes.

"Anyway," said the Sun, "he was paying for it now, for was he not in bed and utterly sick of it, while the rest of the world was out and about and, warmed and cheered by me, completely jolly? Moreover, he didn't feel ill. No self-respecting boy would, of course, admit to feeling ill ever; but Nobby was genuinely unconscious of anything wrong at all. Not, however, until his temperature went down would he be allowed to

get up; that was the verdict. But that was not all. Until it came down he would be allowed nothing but slops to eat.

"His mother took his temperature again before lunch, and it was still a hundred; and then at about half-past four, when human beings, I understand, get a little extra feverish, and it was still a hundred; and then at last came the night, and Nobby went to sleep confident that to-morrow would re-establish his erratic blood.

"On the morrow he woke long before anyone else," said the Sun, "and sat up and saw that I was shining again, without the vestige of a cloud to bother me, and he felt his little body to see how hot it was, and was quite sure that at last he was normal again, but he couldn't tell until his mother was up and about. The weary hours went by, and at last she came in just before breakfast with the thermometer in her hand.

"'I'm certain I'm all right to-day,' I heard Nobby say. 'I feel quite cool everywhere.'

"But, alas and alack," said the Sun, "he was a hundred still.

"'My poor mite!' his mother exclaimed, and Nobby burst into tears.

"'Mayn't I get up? Mayn't I get up?' he moaned; 'I feel so frightfully fit.' But his

mother said no, not till the temperature had gone down. You see," added the Orb of Day, "when Nobbies are only-sons and those only-sons' fathers are fighting the enemy, mothers have to be more than commonly cautious and particular. You will wonder perhaps why she didn't send for the doctor, but it was for two reasons, both womanly ones, and these were that (*a*) she didn't like the *locum*, her own doctor being also at the War, and (*b*) she believed in bed as the best cure.

"And so all through another long day—and when you are vigorous and robust, like Nobby, and accustomed to every kind of impulsive and adventurous activity, day can be, in bed, appallingly long—Nobby was kept a prisoner, always with his temperature at a hundred, and always with nothing to bite, and growing steadily more and more peevish and difficult, so much so that his mother became quite happy again, because it is very well known that when human invalids are testy and impatient with their nurses they are getting better.

"But when on the third morning, although Nobby's temper had become too terrible for words, his temperature was still a hundred, his mother began to be alarmed again. 'It's very strange,' she said to her sister, 'but he seems

perfectly well and cool, and yet the thermometer makes him still a hundred. What do you think we ought to do?'

"Nobby's aunt, who was a wise woman, although unmarried, went up and examined her nephew for herself. 'He certainly looks all right to me,' she said, 'and he feels all right too. Do you think that the thermometer might be faulty? Let me try it;' and with these words Nobby's aunt shook the thermometer down and then put it under her tongue and gave it a good two minutes, and behold it said a hundred; and then Nobby's mother shook it down and tried it and gave it a good two minutes, and behold it said a hundred; and the cook was a hundred too, and the gardener was a hundred, and the girl who came in to help was a hundred, and probably the donkey would have been a hundred, and the pony a hundred, if they had been tested, because a hundred was the thermometer's humorous idea of normal; and so," added the Sun, "Nobby's mother and aunt rushed upstairs two or three at a time, having a great sense of justice, and pulled him out of bed and dressed him and hugged him and told him to be happy once more.

"And a couple of seconds after this," said the Sun, bringing the story to a close, "I saw him again."

The Golden Eagle

THE Prime Minister of Mirth, C.B.E., is, in his songs, as a rule, more of a destructive than a reassuring philosopher. Indeed, the cheerful cynicism of one whose prosperity is invulnerable may be said to be Mr. Robey's prevailing characteristic on the stage. But he once sang, in the person of a landlady, a song which had the refrain, calculated to comfort those in less happy circumstances, "It's a blessing that you never miss the things you've never had." Upon the respective merits of this sentiment and of Tennyson's famous dictum "'Tis better to have loved and lost Than never to have loved at all" much might be said in discussion, although the two statements are not antagonistic; but at the moment, thinking of my poor friend the Golden Eagle, I vote wholly for Mr. Robey's optimism. It is a blessing that we never miss the things we've never had, and, conversely, it is a real calamity to lose something and be unable to forget it or to cease to regret it. In other words, it is better

not to have had a treasure than, being parted from it, to be eternally wistful. Better, that is, for unwilling auditors of the tragedy.

So much for prelude.

It is a hard thing to be credited with power that one does not possess and have to disappoint a simple soul who is relying on one's help. That is a general proposition, but I was reminded of the Golden Eagle and a particular application of it by the remark which some one dropped the other day about Baedeker. "Shall those of us who have kept our Baedekers have the courage to carry them?" she asked; and instantly my mind flew to a certain Italian city and the host of the Aquila d' Oro.

Never can any guest in a hotel have received so much attention from the host as I did in the few days of my sojourn with him before I could bring myself to change to another. And not only from the host, but from every one on the staff, who bent earnest glances on me from morning till night. The Golden Eagle himself, however, did more than that: he buttonholed me. He was always somewhere near the door when I went out and again when I came in: a large, flabby Italian, usually in his shirt sleeves and wearing the loose slippers that strike such dismay into British travellers. "No foreigner," said an acute young

observer to me recently, "ever has a good dog;" not less true is it that no Latin is ever soundly shod. But the Golden Eagle was not exactly slovenly; he owed it to his hotel not to be that; he was merely a vigilant *padrone* eternally concerned with his business.

Although there were other people staying under his roof, and they had better rooms than I and drank a better wine, it was I at whom he made this set. It was I for whom he waited and upon whom his great melancholy eyes rested so wistfully. For he was a Golden Eagle with a grievance, and I, in whose bedroom he had been asked to place a writing-table, I, who never went out without a note-book and who bought so many photographs, I, who so obviously was engaged in studying the city, no doubt for the purposes of a book, I it was who beyond question was in a position, by removing that grievance, to restore him to prosperity and placidity again.

And his grievance? The melancholy stamped upon that vast white countenance, although much of it was temperamental and you might say national (for the Italian features in repose suggest disillusionment and fatalism far oftener than light-heartedness), and the dejection in the great shoulders, were due to the same cause. Baedeker, after years of honourable mention of

the Aquila d' Oro among the hotels of the city, had suddenly, in the last edition, removed the asterisk against the name. The Golden Eagle had lost his star. Now you see the connexion between this pathetic innkeeper (the last man in the world to call Boniface) and our triumphant *lion comique* and the late Lord Tennyson. But in his case it was not better, either for him or me, that he had lost what he had loved. It would have been better, both for him and for me, if he had never had a star.

Why it had been taken from him he had no notion. He had always done his best; his wife had done her best; people were satisfied and came again; but the star had gone. Was not his hotel clean? The linen was soft, the attendance was good. He himself—as I could perceive, could I not?—never rested, nor did his wife. They personally superintended all. They spared nothing for the comfort of the house. Foolish innkeepers no doubt existed who were cheese-parers, but not he. He knew that wherever else economy was wise, it was not in the dining-room. Were not the meals generous and diversified? Could I name a more abundant *collazione* at 4 *lire* or a better *pranzo* at 5? Or served with more despatch? Was not his wine sound and far from dear?

And yet, four years ago, out of a clear sky, and all inexplicably, the star had gone from his hotel. It was monstrous, an outrage. Four years ago—suddenly, for no cause.

When he had looked at the new edition of Baedeker which a visitor had left about and saw it, he could not believe his eyes. He had called his wife—every one: they also were incredulous. It was like a thunderbolt, an earthquake. After all their hard work too, their desire to please, their regular customers, so contented, who came again and again. Was not that the test—that they came again and again? Obviously then the guide-book was wrong, guilty of a wicked injustice.

What did he think could have happened? All he could suppose was that one of Herr Baedeker's agents, staying there incognito, had had some piece of bad fortune; some accident of the kitchen impossible to prevent, but isolated, had occurred and he had taken offence. But how unfair! No one should judge by a single lapse. So many rivals still with stars and he without!

Thus would the Golden Eagle complain, day after day, during my sojourn, always ending with the assurance that I would help him to get the star back, would I not?—I who had such influence?

And now there is to be, I suppose, a new system of guide-book astronomy. If the Golden Eagle has survived the War he may, in the eclipse of Baedeker, be more resigned to his lot: the substitute for that travelling companion may confer a star of his own. But I do not propose to stay with him in order to make sure.

The World Remedial

JOHN STUART MILL'S fear that the notes of the piano might be used up and tunes give out is as nothing to mine that a time must come when there will be no more whimsical literature in the old book shops for these eyes to alight upon. Meanwhile, to renew my confidence, a friend sends me *The Compleat English Physician, or the Druggist's Shop Opened* ("the like not hitherto extant") by William Salmon, who dates his preface "From my house at the Blew Ball by the Ditch-side near Holborn Bridge, London, May 5, 1693." In this exhaustive work the whole of creation, animal, vegetable, and mineral, is levied upon for cures for human ills, any of which are, in the dedication, offered by the author to the Most Serene and Illustrious Princess Mary II., if she feels herself to be in need of physic and will lay her commands upon him.

According to *The Dictionary of National Biography*, which, however, does not mention this

particular book, William Salmon was born in 1644, and was educated by a mountebank. After a certain amount of travel, he settled in London as an irregular practitioner, with pills for everything and horoscopes to boot. The suggestion, made in his lifetime, that he himself did not amass the lore that is found in his many and copious volumes, but was merely an amanuensis, has the *Dictionary's* support; but in the preface to *The Compleat English Physician*, Salmon is very tart and coarse and emphatic about it with one of his detractors ("the nasty author of an impertinent and scurrilous pamphlet"), claiming to have had thirty years' experience of practical pharmacy. But he must have borrowed too, for thirty years, even with a ten-hours' day, could not have sufficed to gather a tenth of the mysteries contained in this astonishing work.

Although it is exclusively medical, Salmon incidentally hits upon as deadly a formula for anti-social satire as could be imagined, beyond even Swift. Not all the malignity of *Gulliver's Travels* is so powerful to remove the divine from man as this empiric's simple inclusion of him among the animals. Book V. is entitled "Of Man and Beasts," and it begins thus: "Chapter 1. Homo, Man & Woman. . . . They are the general inhabitants of the Universal Globe of

the Earth and their food is made of Grain, Pulse, Fruits, Flowers, Roots, Herbs, and the flesh of Beasts, Fowl, Fishes, Insects, etc." Salmon then goes on to enumerate the maladies that the various parts of man (and woman) are good for. His hair, converted to ashes and powdered, will cure the Green Sickness and other disorders too elementary to name. Made into an oil it will ease pains caused by a cold and cause new hair to grow on bald places. The rest of him and of her (I could not possibly go into details—this being not a medical journal and the date being 1919 instead of 1693) is also, either as powder, volatile oil, spirit, essence, salt, magistry, or balsam, beneficial in a vast number of troubles. It is an ironical and exasperating thought that we carry about in our bodies the cures for all the ills that those bodies suffer from.

In most of the sciences the professors of the day know more than their predecessors of yesterday. Knowledge accumulates. But, after dipping into Salmon's twelve-hundred pages, one sighs with relief that the healing art has, since 1693, become comparatively so simple; and in sending for a doctor we thank God for his modern incompleteness.. For in Salmon's day, in the pride of completion, the medical man might have dosed us with our nearest dead neighbour.

Having completed the examination of man as a treasury of restoratives, Salmon passes on to Alces, the Elk; Antilopus, the Antelope; and Asinus, the Ass. All the beasts are therapeutically useful to man, but few more so than Asinus, the Ass. Howsoever valuable a living donkey may be, he cannot compare with the versatility of a donkey defunct when resolved into drugs. Equus, the Horse; Capra, the Goat; and Cercopithecus, the Monkey, are also each a well-stocked chemist's shop. In fact, nothing that moves, whether on four legs or two, fails to yield up a potent elixir; but to find man among them is the shock. Right and proper enough that the Lord of Creation should extract lotions and potions for his ailments from his soulless inferiors; but not from himself. That is a lowering thought.

The birds of the air too. Thus, the flesh of Alauda, the Lark, will ease the cholick: a thing to remember at Ye Old Cheshire Cheese. Alcedo, the Kingfisher, reduced to powder and mixed with powder made from a man's skull, and a little salt of amber, is excellent against the epilepsy. A number of swallows beaten to pieces in a mortar (terrible thought!) produce a residuum that will prevent the falling sickness. For restoring a lost memory the heart of Hirundo, the

Swallow, to which the filings of a man's skull (Mr. Pelman's, for choice?) and dried peony roots are added, is sovran. Even the nest of Hirundo, the Swallow, is of use; made into a cataplasm it not only eases a quinsie, but will cure the bite of a serpent. Nor are the fragile systems of Rubecula, the Robin Redbreast, and Regulus, the Wren (shade of Blake!), without medicinal utility. The flesh of Lucinia, the Nightingale, cures consumptives, while its gall mixed with honey makes an excellent collyrium for the eyes; but singing-birds surely should be exempted from active service under druggists. "Yet" (you say) "if the nightingale cures consumption, it might have cured Keats." True, but had Keats accepted that remedy he would not have been Keats.

It is when writing of Lucinia, the Nightingale, that Salmon interpolates a remark — wholly gratuitous—which gives him a place apart among authors. He perpetrates a curiosity of literature: the most unpoetical thing ever written. "A Mr. Wilkinson, a clergyman," is merely the least poetical line in poetry; but to say that Lucinia, the Nightingale, "grows fat in autumn," is positively to undo magic.

Distrust of Man

WHILE much, of late, in the company of a colt aged seven days, I have been equally struck by its maturity—the preparedness of so tender an infant for this great world—and by its fearlessness. Not exactly fearlessness perhaps, but want of caution and shyness, a readiness or even eagerness for human company. The ordinary process, so disheartening to those who make advances, of gradually coaxing and wooing a horse to be sociable—extending the hand, only to see the beautiful head farther and farther withdrawn—is reversed by this babe and suckling, who comes galloping up on its absurd rickety stilts directly any member of the household appears at the paddock gate, and sees around it (save for flies) only a universe of friends. Why, I ask myself, should time transform this trust into suspicion? Man will do nothing to assist that process; no one whom the colt will see for months and months will be anything but kind, but gradually a gulf between it and human beings will open and widen.

It will become a horse: that is to say, a powerful alien, with a will of its own; with feet of iron and a tendency to set them down carelessly; with startled eyes in which the fire of panic or even frenzy seems ever alert to flare up; and a constant and disquieting hostile restiveness: in short, a monster of which, unless one has been born and bred in the stable, one must be very wary. That is what this little, engaging, frolicsome foal is going to become: possibly even that most terrifying thing on earth, a policeman's charger keeping back an angry mob.

But whatever it grows into, this is undeniable: that, excepting possibly for one person, its attendant, it will shrink from the caress even of the least nervous and most admiring of hippophils. Why, after such an infancy of affection, should this be?

I have been recently also on visiting terms with a Jersey calf of a few weeks' age, and here again I have met with confidence. It has not capered into sociability as the little horse does, but it has not resented the caressing touch; whereas it is with difficulty that one can induce its mother to allow any ingratiation. Yet that mother, when a calf, was without misgivings. Where, I ask, is suspicion bred? What can happen on a wholly amicable estate, where the four-footed animals

are treated with certainly no less consideration than the assistants, to set up a feeling of doubt as to the intentions of the approaching biped?

The secret, I suppose, resides in heredity. Horses and cattle once were wild, and as such were afraid of the superior animal whose one desire was to catch them and tame them. Centuries of captivity have not extinguished the ancient sparks. Dogs, it is true, also once were wild; but with their tameness they did not lose the privileges of liberty as those others do.

Of what inner fears these little creatures are the prey we cannot of course know; but the progress of the human child, as regards subjective terrors, is surely the opposite of the colt's and the calf's, as regards those that are objective, for we grow out of them rather than into them. The child who, at night, when sent upstairs on some errand, comes down again like a whirlwind, white with fright, to escape an imaginary pursuer, finds as experience comes that that foe does not exist; and gradually the dark ceases to be dreadful. It is a pity that equine and bovine children cannot develop on similar lines.

Not that I am particularly anxious to cultivate relations with cows or bullocks: they are uncomfortable animals at the best and it is impossible to look upon horns as anything but

non-conductors of sympathy. But horses I am honestly prepared to adore, and it is mortifying to find them so unwilling to be patted and petted. A horse's beauty demands the tribute of touch; but one is so rarely permitted to give it.

Broken English

TWO examples of broken English have recently fallen upon my grateful ear—both from the lips of door-keepers of restaurants.

The first touched upon an untimely, although welcome, heat-wave.

"It is," I remarked with an affability equalled only by want of originality, "almost too warm."

"Yes," the porter replied; "ze 'ot, 'e come all in one."

On the second occasion I was waiting for a guest who was late. It is an old habit of mine, and nothing seems to break it. After a while I commented, pleasantly, to the door-keeper on the tendency of the fair sex to be behind time.

He laughed the light, easy laugh of one who has deep intimacy with the world we live in. "Ladies always late," he said; "always make themselves wish and desire for."

However faulty in construction, both those

phrases are epigrammatic. I should not go so far as to say they could not be improved upon, yet it would be difficult to make them more vivid. To endow the heat with gender is assuredly to add to its reality: a blast from Vulcan's furnace, for example; while the remark about the tarrying ladies enshrines a great verity such as restaurant door-keepers are perhaps better fitted to understand than most of us. At any rate, if a restaurant door-keeper does not learn such things, who can? Both phrases also show that neither speaker, after I know not how many years in England, is yet making any effort to talk English, but is content to clothe his own native thoughts in the most adequate English apparel that he can collect; just as I, for one, never have done in France other than translate more or less faithfully my English sentences into French. As for talking French—never! No such good fortune. But I am quite sure that, however amusing my blunders have been, no one has ever thought them epigrammatic, because the English syntax does not automatically tend to witty compression as the French does.

With Baboo broken English we have long been familiar. Whole books have been devoted to its exploitation; but the supply is continuous and something new is ever emerging from India.

Broken English

Here is a recent effort by a Calcutta student in search of pleasure. Writing to a firm of job-masters in that city, he says :—

DEAR SIR,—It is to approach you for a kind consideration. I am a student. I want a carriage either a tandaum or a phaeton for evening drive now and then but not every-day. It is to know from you whether you allow your carriages to be engaged for part of a day say from 5 to 9 or 10 in the evening and if the answer be in the affirmative at what rate you do so. If you have no such rule will you be kind enough to consider the case of a young man who wants a carriage for joy-driving. It rests solely with you and be good and kind enough to grant him what he wants. As regards charges in the first instance let me tell you and which you perhaps know thoroughly well that the student is generally poor but merry, the best for him is to have it free of any charge and if such cannot be the case, be kind enough to let me know what least you can charge him for the same. I shall inform you by phone or by a letter the date and time when I shall require the carriage, you will send it with your syce and at the end of every month I shall pay off the bill. I know driving but not very nicely ; and if you kindly grant me my humble prayer you may send me a nice and well trained horse and I shall do well with it. In a month's time I may require it 6 or 7 times in the evening. Now, Sir, I do not know how far I have been able to express fully what I wish to but I hope you have fully understood what I mean and I pray you, Sir, to give it a kind consideration and let me know of it at your earliest convenience. This may seem to you like a fancy but I am sure you have understood what I mean and desire, and again I request you to grant me my humble prayer for which act of kindness I shall remain ever obliging to you. Please try to give it free of any charge ; this will not affect your huge business the least on the other hand will provide a student with a merriest job for which act he will pray to the Almighty for the prosperity

and good-name of the firm. You have understood what I mean so kindly excuse me for the language used. Please keep this secret and confidential.

A favourable reply is expected at the earliest possible convenience by—Sincerely yours,

The African supplicant has now entered the lists too, and there are few mails from the West Coast that do not bring to a certain London publishing firm appeals for catalogues and books. The difference between the Baboo and the African is very striking. The Baboo approaches the patron almost on his stomach, certainly with a cringe, whereas the African smiles light-heartedly, baring all his white teeth with cheerful confidence. Here is a typical letter from a student in Ashanti to the firm in question :—

DEAR SIR,—I am with much pleasure to indite you about your name that has come to my hand with great joy. On the receipt of this letter, know that I want to be one of your fellow friends. You have been reported to me by a friend of mine of your good attention and benevolences. My openion of writing you is to say, I want to take you as my favourite friend. Everything or news that may be happened there at your side, I wish you to report same to me. And I also shall report same to you satisfaction. Will you be good enough to agree with me? Then I hope to get few lines of news from you being as you consented or disconsented. To have a friend at abroad is something that delights the life. I am earnestly requested to hear from you soon. I beg to detain, dear Sir, Yours truly, ——

Thus does another ambitious youth, also in Ashanti, in whose veins the virus of English

civilization has begun to work, put his needs and his hopes and his potentialities before a well-known London firm of travel agents with outposts all over the world :—

DEAR SIRS,—I have the honour most respectfully to bring this before you to ask your favour to remit me down per the very first outward mail steamer to send me passenger's ticket so that I may run up quickly to your station and stay with you, because I often hear and know that you are the best trainer in the city of London. So I wish you will send me ticket. I am orphan. The object which induces me to write you this letter is this, I wish to be an competent educated fellow, but in our Africa here there exists no better school and tutor. I hope you will do my request, and may this my humble letter meet you in good condition. I am orphan. Awaiting your favourable reply per the next steamer coming, I beg to be, Sirs, Your obedient Servant,

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From China comes a specimen of English as fractured with the best of motives by a Chinese student. The Kaiser having been given as the subject of an essay competition by the English class in whatever Celestial college it happened to be, some admirable documents resulted, from one of which I take a few salient sentences :—

The German Kaiser is not the Superior Man as deciphered by the Chinese literature ; he is surely a mean fellow containing much fraudish cunnings in his deceited heart. The Superior Man is shown in the merits of excellent heart with much loving kindness to all peoples ; the mean fellow is displayed in the black heart of the ungenerated devils of the hell with much loving kindness only to himself. . . . The

German Kaiser he awfully wishing to slave the people and extinct the civilisations of the universe; he destroy the literature books, and the arts, and the ships, and mess the people of Allies Nations together with the intermediate outstanding Nations. . . . Thus it will be clearly seen by whole universal globe that the German Hun Kaiser he conceal much brutish iniquity in his heart, and is not fit to sit in the pail of the Allies Nations including the Chinese Republic.

There, again, the meaning of the writer could not be made more clear by perfect prose.

And here is a Japanese jewel, which the London office of a Tokio engineering house received not long since:—

Regarding the matter of escaping penalty for non-delivery of the machine, there is a way to creep round same by diplomat. We must make a statement of big strike occur in our factory (of course big untrue). Please address my firm in enclosed form of letter and believe this will avoid penalty of case.

As Mr. B. is a most religeous and competent man and also heavily upright and godly it fears me that useless apply for his signature. Please attach name by Yokahama office making forge, but no cause to fear prison happening as this is often operated by other merchants of highest integrity.

It is highest unfortunate Mr. B. so god-like and excessive awkward for business purpose. I think much better add little serpentlike wisdom to upright manhood and so found a good business edifice.

From broken English to broken-hearted English is but a step, and I have before me as pretty an example of that piteous tongue as—short of a great and tragic poignancy—could be

wished. It is a letter written by a little American boy named Arthur Severn Mead to his parents from his first school.

My Most Dearest Father and Mother,—I am very sick and I want to come home.

O dearest father and mother I know that you wont refuse me. I have a very bad headache. I dont eat anything nor I dont sleep any. I lay awake every night thinking of home and you dearest father and mother.

O dearest father and mother wilt thou father let me come home.

I cannot live here. I am crying all the time.

I will take it out of my money and will work for you all the time.

My most dearest mother I was opening my trunk today and I found those candys you put in and O dearest mother how I thank you

O dearest Father and Mother I pray for you every night and morning and I pray to Him that you will let me come home and I know that thou wilt say "yes."

I cannot go to school because I am so sick. O dearest father and mother I will love you so much and I will never worry you any more and I will be a better boy if you will only say yes.

Dearest father and mother I cannot live here. O do let me come home.

Write now dearest father and mother and say yes.

I send my love to all.

Good bye.—From your loving son

Arthur

Say yes dearest Father and Mother.

Telephonics

AFTER fighting against bondage for years I am now a slave: I have a telephone.

Although the advantages are many, it means that I have lost the purest and rarest of life's pleasures—which was to ring up from a three-pence-in-the-slot call-office (as I continually had to do) and not be asked for the money. This, in many years, has happeued to me twice; and only last week I met a very rich man who is normally of a gloomy cast, across whose features played a smile brilliant with triumph, for it also had just happened to him.

On the other hand, through having a telephone of my own I now escape one of the commonest and most tiresome of life's irritations—which is to wait outside one of these call-offices while the person inside is carrying on a conversation that is not only unnecessary and frivolous, but unending. In London these offices are used both by men and women; but in the suburbs by women only, who may be thought to be romantically

engaged but really are reminding their husbands not to forget the fish. The possession of a telephone of one's own, however, does not, in an imperfect world, put an end to the ordeal of waiting. If ever a fairy godmother appeared to me (but after all these years of postponement I can hardly hope for her) with the usual offer of a granted wish, I should think long before I hit upon anything better to ask for than the restoration of all the time I had spent with my own telephone at my ear, waiting to be answered. The ordinary delays can be long enough, but for true foretastes of eternity you must sit at the instrument while some one is being fetched from a distant part of the building. This is a foretaste not only of eternity but of perdition, for there is nothing to do; and to have nothing to do is to be damned. If you had a book by you, you could not read it, for your thoughts are not free to wander; all that you are mentally capable of is to speculate on the progress of the messenger to the person who is wanted, upstairs or down, the present occupation of the person who is wanted, and the probable stage of his journey to the receiver. In this employment, minutes, hours, days, weeks even, seem to drag their reluctant length along.

You can imagine also the attitude of the person

who is sent for. For the telephone, common as it now is, is still associated with importance. At any rate, I notice that men called to it by page boys in restaurants and hotels have a special gait of importance proper to the occasion.

The possession of a telephone, no doubt, now and then simplifies life; but its complications are too many, even if you adopt the sound rule to be more rung against than ringing. One is the perplexity incident to delays and misunderstandings, and, above all, as to the constitution of Exchanges. We all, I suppose, have our own idea as to what they are like, whether it be Gerrard, Central, or Pad. There must at one time or other have been photographs in the *Strand Magazine*; but I missed them, and, therefore, decline on a vague vision of machinery and wire-eared ladies. A friend is more definite: "A large building," he describes it, "like Olympus, the roof lost in darkness, and pallid women moving about, spinning tops and blowing penny trumpets." To me, as I have suggested, there is more of Tartarus than Olympus about it. A sufficient hell, indeed, for any misspent life, to be continually calling up numbers, and continually being met with the saddest words that are known to men: "Number engaged."

I want to understand the whole telephone system. I want to know how the operators all

get to speak exactly alike. Women can be very imitative, I am aware: the chorus girl's transition from Brixton to the Savoy can be as natural as the passage of dusk to dawn, and a change of accent is usually a part of the phenomenon; but it is astonishing how the operators of the different Exchanges resemble each other. They cannot all be one and the same. Miraculous as is everything connected with the telephone — talking quietly over wires that thread the earth beneath the busiest and noisiest of pavements in the world is sufficiently magical—it would be a shade too marvellous for one operator to be everywhere at once. Therefore, there must be many. Is there, then, a school of elocution, where instruction in the most refined form of speech ever known is imparted, together with lessons in the trilling of the letter R? Why should they all say "No replay," when they mean "No reply"? And how do they talk at home? It must be terrible for their relations if they don't come down a peg or two there. The joy with which we recognize a male voice at the Exchange is another proof that woman does not really represent the gentler sex.

But these are by no means all the mysteries as to which I crave enlightenment. I want to know how the odd and alarming noises are made.

There is a tapping, as of a woodpecker with delirium tremens, which at once stuns and electrifies the ear. How do they do that, and do they know what its effect is? And why does one sometimes hear other conversations over other wires, and sometimes not? Rarely are they interesting; but now and then . . . My pen falters as I record the humiliating want of perspicacity—the tragic inability to recognize a tip—which befell me on the morning of June 4th, 1919—in other words, on Derby Day: the day when the art or science of vaticination experienced in this country its darkest hour, for every prophet gave The Panther. To my annoyance I had to listen to a long conversation between what seemed to be a bookmaker and his client with regard to money to be placed on Grand Parade. This at the time only irritated me, but afterwards, when Grand Parade had won at 33 to 1, and I recognized the interruption as an effort of the gods on my behalf (had I but ears to hear), how against my folly did I rail!

Telephony, it is clear, both from one's own experience and from reading the letters in the papers, is not yet an exact science. Not, that is, in real life; although on the stage and in American detective novels it seems to be perfect. The actor lifts the receiver, mentions the number, and

begins instantly to talk. If he is on the film his lips move like burning rubber and his mouth becomes a shifting cavern. Do the rank and file of us, I wonder, when telephoning, thus grimace? I must fix up a mirror and see.

There are many good telephone stories. The best that I know is told of a journalist with a somewhat hypertrophied bump of reverence for worldly success, whose employer is a peer. We will call the employer Lord Forthestait and the journalist Mr. Blank. A number of the staff were talking together, in one of the rooms of the newspaper, when the telephone rang.

"You're wanted at the 'phone, Mr. Blank," said the clerk.

Blank, who was just going out to lunch, came back impatiently and snatched at the instrument.

"Yes, what is it?" he snapped out.

"Is that Blank?" came back the reply. "Lord Forthestait speaking."

"Yes, my lord," said Blank, with the meekest deference, removing his hat.

Note

SUCH of the foregoing essays and diversions as are not new are reprinted from *Punch, Land and Water, The Sphere, The Outlook, The King's Highway,* and *The Daily Express.* All have been revised, and often extended, for the present volume.

E. V. L.

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